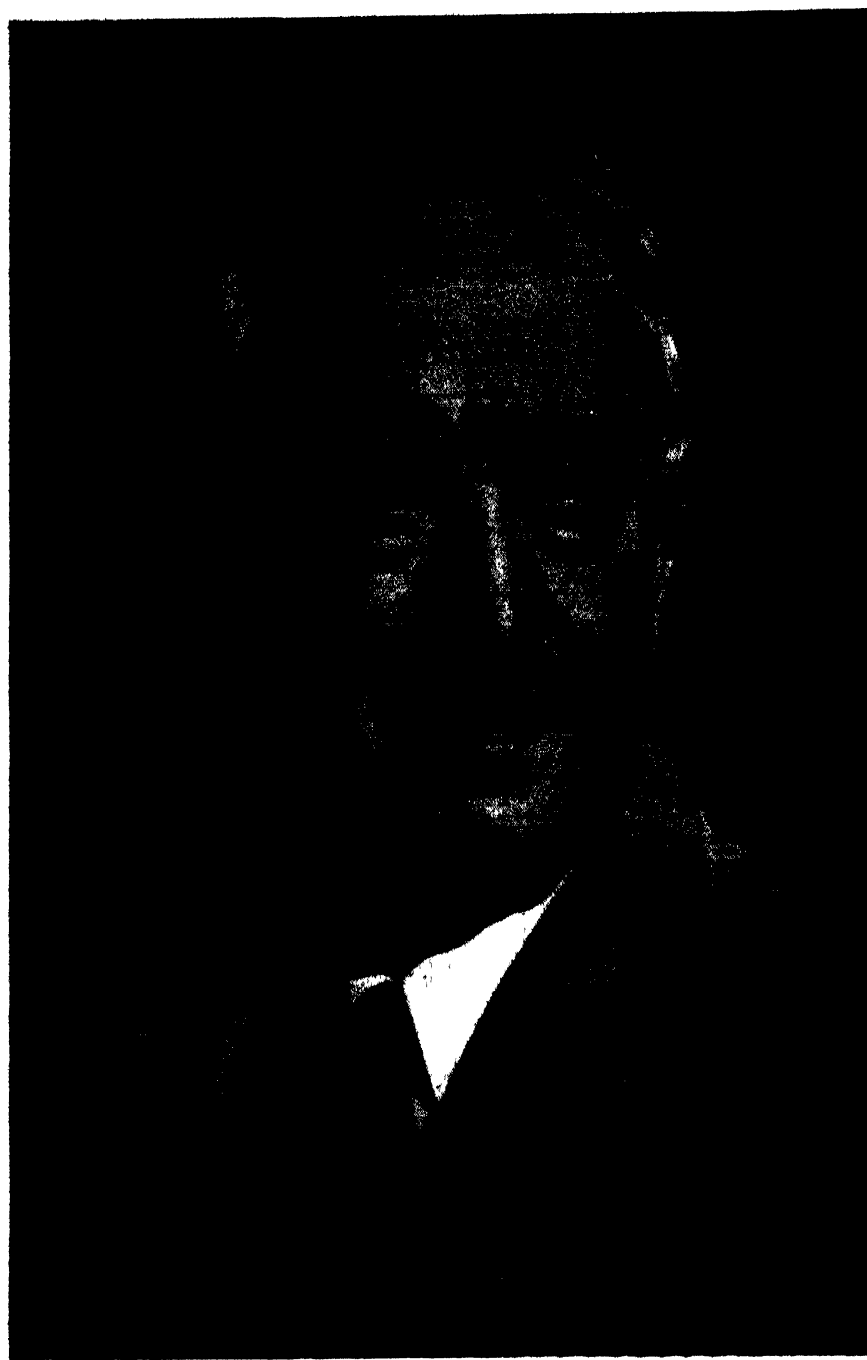


ATTILIO PICCIRILLI
LIFE OF AN AMERICAN SCULPTOR



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AMERICAN SCULPTOR

BY

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QUEENS COLLEGE

PITMAN PUBLISHING CORPORATION
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P R E F A C E

ATTILIO PICCIRILLI reminds me of a well cultivated, perfect, sweet California orange. It is so typically American — only the seed came from Italy. I say he is purely American because he is part of the artistic life of our country. He hasn't deviated one bit in the sixty years he has been here. There would be indeed a long list of names if all American artists who have enjoyed the benefit of his friendship and help and sound artistic guidance were to be mentioned in this book. There are so many things in his life that enriched our city and country. I wish that they all could be told for the life of this unusual person is replete with interesting events in the growth and development of art in this country.

Have you ever seen Attilio Piccirilli? Well perhaps you have, but to see him on the street, in the home, in the subway, you would never recognize him as one of the outstanding sculptors of our time. No, his hair is not long and wavy and uncombed. He dresses like a business man; no long flowing black tie. His clothes fit him and he is the most modest man that ever lived. He will talk about anybody else's art and recognize the beauty of it. I have never heard him knock a fellow artist. Another strange thing about Piccirilli is that he works at his art systematically, regularly and consistently. He does not loaf for months and months waiting for an inspiration. He goes right to his task methodically and

he loves it. To see him mold, one sees the transmission of his love of labor and his affection for the task in the gentle handling of the clay. He always reminded me of a young mother bathing her new born infant.

I have always liked Piccirilli. I really don't know when I first met him. It seems I have known him forever. Almost immediately "*Ci siamo dati del tu*" and became fast friends, a friendship that I greatly cherish. I have learned a lot from Piccirilli that stood me in great use during many many years of my work. I think I gave Piccirilli something. I taught him how to laugh thirty five years ago. We have been laughing ever since.

Fiorello H. LaGuardia

INTRODUCTION

This book grew out of a research project on American sculpture which the author undertook several years ago. It was during this survey that the paramount qualities of Attilio Piccirilli's work became apparent. In contrast with chosen examples of the best work of individual artists, representing a fair index and cross-section of the character and development of early American sculpture, Piccirilli's sculpture abounds in qualities inherent in good art.

When Piccirilli arrived from London to settle in New York in 1888, he found a city bustling with life and economic activity. Powerful business corporations and industrial organizations were being formed, and opportunities for wealth were limited only by the individual's enterprise and ambition. Expansion of business immediately following the Civil War required construction of many commercial and industrial buildings, and the Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, established the eclecticism in architectural style which swept throughout the United States. This sterile style, with its flamboyant, inorganic facades and over-elaborate interiors weighed down with frivolous decoration, was soon adopted for the private residences of the wealthy as evidence of their growing opulence and power.

This architectural formula, stemming from an unimagin-

ative medley of historical styles, was reflected in the artistic taste of the period and affected almost every phase of living. It became the accepted mode of the day. Proponents of eclecticism were found not only among architects, but fashion designers, interior decorators, designers of furniture and household wares. The same love of frills and artificiality was found in sculpture. In this new world Piccirilli began his career.

In an age which sacrificed form for frills, Piccirilli's art stands out boldly for its discipline, simplicity and dignity. He repudiated the unsavory realism prevalent in sculpture, founded on a blind adherence to neo-classic doctrines, in favor of a more refreshing idealism. His sculpture was and is simply tailored, free from adventitious detail and superficiality, and predicated on an aesthetic philosophy suited to his own temperament and creative instincts. Piccirilli's style is distinctly personal and highly selective. Simplicity is his gospel, restraint his creed.

Piccirilli does not conceal his love for the human body as a sculptural form, and his work, far ahead of his time stylistically, differs widely from traditionally inspired American sculpture. Piccirilli is too aesthetically aware and conscious of the creative processes, however, to believe that the human body *per se* is so beautiful that interpretation is unwarranted. He never borrows literally from nature, but chooses elements which are abstracted and generalized, making them subservient to the integral unit of the sculptural composition. Early American sculpture lacks the impeccable taste, reserve and simplicity of Piccirilli's sculpture.

Generically, Piccirilli may be called a humanist, but his humanism is personally tempered, revealing all the identification marks of a newer, more modern concept of sculptural form. He

may be called, more correctly, a modern-classicist. Piccirilli's work is modern, not in the sense that he seeks a new formula for abstract beauty, but in his daring simplification and subtle distortion of form to heighten the abstract qualities of the human body. The severity found in his noncommissioned work accelerates the impact of the beauty of sculptural form.

Contemporary sculptors strive for a formal, abstract beauty, frequently devoid of ideas, and based on a geometric harmony, using the human body as an incidental counterpart of their designs. Piccirilli endeavors to establish an aesthetic equilibrium of both elements without destroying the identity of one or the other. There is never an attempt to separate these essential elements of design. Rather, Piccirilli's consolidation of the beauty of the nude with its formal, abstract character, does not lessen the intensity of either but complements each element. He simplifies the nude to bring out its abstract beauty; contemporary sculptors abstract the nude for greater simplicity, and in so doing, often neglect the beauty of the form.

The sculpture of today did not appear on the contemporary scene in its full maturity. Piccirilli's work is the transitional link between the spiritless, academic art of the early Twentieth Century in America, and the beautiful, abstract creations of the contemporary school. As the forerunner of present-day art, Piccirilli helps to explain the evolution and development of American sculpture. His influence on the sculpture of the last fifty years is evident.

It is hoped that this critique of the artist and his work will contribute to a better understanding of American sculpture. Such a challenge set the author on an exciting quest of the man, his work and his life. This book is a critical analysis and appre-

ciation of the sculptor, and its pages will unfold the story of a charming personality whose art is imbued with the same reserve and sincerity which are the most essential qualities of the man Piccirilli.

Queen College
May, 1944

J.V.L.

CHAPTER I

Birth — Artistic Heritage — Boyhood — Study at the R. Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome — Study at the Académie de France à Rome — Life as a Student — Visits to Florence — Expulsion from R. Accademia di Belle Arti — Re-instatement — Psychological Effects of Expulsion on Personality — Achievements as a Student — His Return Home

The small and delicate fingers of a ten-year-old boy were hurriedly shaping a mass of formless clay in his father's studio in Massa-Carrara, Tuscany, not many miles from the shores of the blue Mediterranean. The brilliant sun, which lighted the spacious studio through large windows placed high in the wall, was setting rapidly behind a distant hill. Straddled on a home-made bench, his blouse open at the neck, the boy worked faster and faster as the receding sun left darkness behind it.

Two large doors, twelve feet high and supported by heavy wrought-iron hinges, led into the high-ceiling studio. Armatures, working tables laden with chisels, rasps, and mallets; unhewn blocks of marble, a model's platform, and statues of different size and design, were in great disorder on the stone floor of the studio. A large, barrel-shaped coal stove stood off to one corner. A double row of wooden shelves, weighed down with plaster models and other bits of statuary gray with dust, lined two

sides of the wall. Everything was becoming slowly engulfed in darkness.

In this atmosphere, the little boy worked fervidly and alone. He was aware of impending dusk, but he was even more intent on seeing the soft, fascinating clay take form. Everywhere, everything was fading away. Light for a moment seemed unimportant, as his little fingers modeled a head instinctively, and the clay responded to them like magic.

Late that afternoon, his father, missing him at home, went directly to the studio which stood several hundred feet from the house, where he invariably found the youngster at play. Unobserved, he looked through one of the studio doors which he had opened slightly, and saw the boy sitting at the modeling table enthralled by the heap of clay before him. As it was not yet time for dinner, he returned home satisfied in knowing where to find the lad.

Through some inadvertence, the young boy was not missed at the dinner table, and it was not until bedtime, when his mother inquired of his whereabouts, that the father suddenly remembered where he had left him. Without stopping to put on his coat, he ran the short distance to the studio, expecting to find the frightened boy alone in the dark. There was an oil lamp in the studio which he knew was too high for the boy to reach. On entering the studio he lighted the lamp and found the boy fast asleep with his arms and head resting on the modeling table, still holding a handful of clay. As he bent over to pick up the boy in his arms, he chanced to see what he had been "playing" with. He could not believe his eyes—he turned to the young boy sound asleep in his arms with pride and admiration. The likeness of a younger brother whom the little boy was modeling was

astonishing. He blew out the light and returned home, the picture of what he had seen vividly in mind, with the boy who was later to become one of America's leading sculptors.

Attilio Piccirilli was born into a family of sculptors with a glorious artistic heritage in which the tradition of the stone carver continued without interruption from the days of the early Renaissance. He was born on the sixteenth day of May, 1866, in the picturesque town of Massa-Carrara situated among the beautiful hills and cypress-covered mountains of Tuscany, a short distance from the City of Pisa.

The principal industry of the small town was centered about the world-famed Carrara quarries, as it is still today. The houses, with their red, terra-cotta roofs, are built with expensive Carrara marble. So is every public building and church. Even the streets are paved with the same material. From these famous mountains, to whose interest the town is entirely dedicated, the exquisite marble is exported throughout the civilized world.

Attilio's father, Giuseppe (1844-1910), was Roman by birth, and received his early training in sculpture as an apprentice in the atelier of the Roman sculptor, Stefano Galletti, who later became the President of the famous *Accademia di San Luca* in Rome.

At the age of sixteen, Giuseppe Piccirilli, an idealistic and impulsive youth, left home to join the forces of the great Italian patriot, Giuseppe Garibaldi, who was gathering an army in the north of Italy in preparation for another military expedition to promote Italian unification. Young Giuseppe had heard of the formidable army being massed in Florence, and together with several friends, left Rome to join Garibaldi's red-shirts, but was bitterly disappointed when rejected because of his youth. He re-

fused to return home and lingered in Florence for several weeks. One day he learned that another army was being organized at Massa-Carrara, where army regulations were not always stringently enforced.

He arrived at Massa-Carrara the following day where he appeared before the commanding officer who was so impressed by the youth's pluck and spirited determination to serve his country that he was ordered into training immediately.

So many volunteers were converging upon Massa-Carrara at this time that the army could not provide sleeping quarters for its soldiers. Giuseppe was compelled to seek shelter elsewhere and soon found lodging in the small local hotel. During the weeks of military training that followed, Giuseppe, who habitually spent his evenings at the hotel before retiring, fell deeply in love with the proprietor's daughter, a charming young lady named Barbara Giorgi. When the command was given for the army to move on, Giuseppe parted with his first love, but not before making a solemn promise to return to Massa-Carrara at the end of the military campaign to unify Italy.

After serving a merry and adventurous term in the army, he returned to marry the fair-skinned, laughing girl who was to become Attilio's mother, and whose memories even the glories of battle had not been able to dim.

On his return to Massa-Carrara, Giuseppe settled to raise a family. With his not-too-ample means, he rented a studio to continue the tradition which had occupied his family for generations. From this happy union six sons, all destined to become sculptors, and a daughter were born. The birth of his first son, Ferruccio, in 1864, was an occasion of great rejoicing. Attilio was

born in 1866, followed by Furio (1868), Masaniello (1870), Orazio (1872), Getulio (1874), and Iole, the last child, in 1885.

Work at Massa-Carrara was plentiful, and in less than ten years Giuseppe had amassed a considerable fortune. His success impelled him to work with greater vigor, but, unfortunately, the difficulty of a dear friend who sought his aid was responsible for his financial ruin. Giuseppe generously agreed to make several financial commitments in behalf of his friend, and when events had taken an unforeseen and sinister course, he found himself almost penniless. He now had great difficulty in supporting his seven growing children, and although the family was not destitute, it had a taste of poverty. To increase the income of the family, the older boy, Ferruccio, spent every available moment after school helping his father in his shop.

Attilio's curiosity in his father's work kept him constantly by his side. The marble itself seems to have had a strange, compelling attraction for him which mystified and enthralled him. He was too young to understand or explain this strange feeling other than to know that he was very happy while carrying on his observations in his father's studio. Too young to render any assistance, he would sit quietly in the studio watching his father intently at work carving beautiful forms from huge blocks of marble. To him his father was performing acts of magic which intrigued and fascinated him. Attilio still remembers those quiet and entertaining hours of observation which made him think and dream of the day to come when he too would be old and strong enough to give expression to his own creative impulses. His father's sculpture and influence did much to mark indelibly his sensitive, impressionable soul and to nurture his aesthetic spirit and sensibilities.



PLATE 2

Collection of the Sculptor

GETULIO

Attilio brought to his teacher every morning. At the end of the school day, his teacher would make a written report of his behavior in school in the same little book for his father to read that evening. In this novel and interesting way, both his father and his teacher were kept informed of the boy's doings throughout the day. Today this little diary is among the sculptor's most prized possessions. His son's facility for getting into mischief, his delicate health, and the fact that the boy might have to live in Rome alone without family guidance worried his father. And yet, in spite of these misgivings, he sent his boy on to Rome.

At the age of fourteen, the young artist was sent to Rome with six lire (about one dollar and twenty cents) in his pockets and an insatiable desire to learn all there was to be known about the art he loved so well. On his arrival in Rome, he was bewildered by the sudden transition—his home town appeared ridiculously small in comparison to the capital city with its bustling life, cafes, bright lights, and wide boulevards. He walked through the streets pleasantly befuddled, and in that hypnotic state spent his first day wandering about aimlessly, charmed by the majesty of Imperial Rome. So fascinated was he that he does not remember where he spent his first night.

He had an aunt of comfortable means living in Rome whom he went to see the following day at the suggestion of his father, who had hoped that she might give his son lodging in her home as he was financially unable to provide adequately for the boy. She was a kind, but shrewd and practical woman. When Attilio went to see his aunt, his shabby, ill-fitting clothes and delicate stature touched her sympathies. But she also noticed that he was a handsome lad with fair skin and a crop of curly black hair. She invited him to dinner that evening to get better

acquainted before making her final decision as to whether she would shelter him.

The more she looked at him at dinner that evening, the more convinced was she of the undesirability of having a young, good looking boy living in the same house with her comely, sixteen-year-old daughter. She resolved that he would have to seek living quarters elsewhere, but not wishing to hurt the poor boy needlessly, sent him to live with a friend for a few days.

She wrote to the lad's father and presented the problem in much the same manner as she had reasoned. Despite the fact that Attilio was well behaved, she wrote, there was no telling what might happen. He was then fourteen and planning to spend four or five years at the Academy. By that time, she thought, he would be a matured man. She did not distrust the innocent boy, but neither would she countenance the thought of having two normal youngsters living together in the same house. She was, indeed, too practical a woman.

When Attilio was finally told that he had to seek shelter elsewhere, he was sadly disappointed. A large, strange city is so unfriendly, and the possibilities of living with his aunt had made him happy. As a kindly gesture she offered to give him a bowl of soup for his lunch every day.

Several days later, with the opening of school, Attilio went to see Stefano Galletti, President of the *Accademia di San Luca*, with a letter of introduction from his father. Galletti, in whose studio Attilio's father had been apprenticed as a young man, was happy to welcome the son of an old associate and to launch him on his sculptor's career as he had done many years previous for his father. Attilio was rather young to enter the Academy, but Galletti, impressed by the sketches submitted by

the boy as specimens of his work, gave him a letter to the President of the *R. Accademia di Belle Arti*, Giuseppe Prosperi, where Attilio matriculated and began his studio work the following day.

The *R. Accademia di Belle Arti* was originally part of the famous *Accademia di San Luca* in Rome. It became an independent academy in 1874 when officials of the *Accademia di San Luca* successfully resisted attempts by the Italian Government to institute certain organizational reforms.

Thrilled beyond expression, and not wanting to waste a precious moment of his time at school, he began work with an untiring vigor, at which his older companions marveled. So enthusiastically engrossed had he become in his work that he no longer brooded over his deprivations. The luxuries and comforts of home enjoyed by more fortunate students became unimportant to him; he was now concerned with nobler things. Even to this day, despite his comfortable means, Attilio lives modestly and unpretentiously.

Most of his suffering in Rome was occasioned by the almost intolerable living conditions which presented a seemingly insoluble problem. What little money he received from home had to be spent for food. Luckily, his popularity at school brought him good fortune. His humble and quiet nature and the fact that he was the youngest student at the Academy endeared him to all his classmates. They respected and envied him for his astounding skill as an artist and for the fact that his teacher, Girolamo Masini, regarded him as the most promising student in the Academy.

One of the older boys, Giuseppe Mangione, who fortunately received a substantial income from home, became so fond of Attilio that he offered to share his apartment with him. The offer was promptly accepted. Although life suddenly became

more cheerful, it was not altogether ideal. His friend was a *bon vivant* and loved the gay life of Rome's night clubs more than he did the study of art which he used as a pretext to live alone in Rome away from parental supervision. There was only one key to the apartment which it was not Attilio's good fortune to possess. As a result, he was with regular frequency compelled to spend many long hours huddled close to the outside door of the building, without a warm coat and often in the rain, awaiting the return of his roommate from nocturnal rendezvous. The cold winds which swept unmercifully through the dark and narrow streets of Rome spent their fury on the young lad. His clothes were meagre and worn and did not offer much protection against cold and rainy weather. He was the only student at the Academy who did not have an overcoat—a luxury he had to forego in order to continue his studies. When his friend did return, usually in the early morning hours, Attilio had to carry him to the apartment, undress him and put him to bed because his inebriated stupor made him wholly unable to help himself. Although the hardships Attilio endured by these nightly tasks deprived him of much needed sleep and rest, he was ever grateful for having a comfortable place in which to live during the four years this arrangement lasted.

Attilio spent his time in Rome with unusual profit. The school day at the Academy began at eight o'clock in the morning and ended at three in the afternoon. A half hour was allowed for lunch at noon. At night he studied drawing at the *Académie de France à Rome*, which offered free instruction in art. The class lasted two hours and he attended five nights a week. On Saturdays he visited the numerous museums, private galleries and churches. Sunday was generally spent in the library or at the public con-

certs which are still held in almost every public square in Rome. Thus his stay in Rome was spent in many cultural pursuits, although he did not altogether neglect the study of life and life's ways—like every normal boy with natural impulses he enjoyed the companionship of young women.

Upon completion of his first year at the Academy with glory and distinction, he returned home to spend the summer months with his family and to help his father.

Attilio had worked with such zeal and promise during his second year that, at the end of the school year in July, he was awarded the Academy prize given annually to the student demonstrating outstanding ability, promise and originality in his work. He was very proud of the honor bestowed upon him and this happiness took on an even greater significance as he was now able to show his father tangible evidence of his success and also prove that the hardships voluntarily assumed by the family to enable him to continue his studies at the Academy had not been borne in vain.

On his way home that summer he stopped at Florence for several weeks where he visited the historic places and studied the great monuments of Renaissance art. His father had sent him sufficient money to stay in Florence as a reward for his success in Rome. Although he had been in Florence many times on brief visits with his father, never before had he enjoyed the opportunity to stay several weeks.

While in that city he studied the great marbles of Michelangelo in the Sacristy of San Lorenzo and in the Bargello, the National Museum of Art. He was greatly impressed by Michelangelo's *David*, which in his mature life was to serve as an inspiration for his statue of the *Spirit of Youth* (Plate 59).

Lorenzo Ghiberti's superb Gothic elegance as demonstrated in his bronze doors of the Baptistry of Saint John, known as the *Gates of Paradise*, and Donatello's realism and humanism made a deep impression upon him. Their art was based upon the exquisite beauty of the antique which he himself admired. In the succeeding years, he made an annual pilgrimage to Florence during the summer months "to refresh his soul."

His second year at the Academy began auspiciously enough, but came well nigh ending in disaster. One day during the first month of school, the instructor of Attilio's class was absent and the older boys took advantage of the occasion to engage in a class competition of their own. The older boys instigated the students of the class to make a clay model in exaggerated proportions of the male external genitalia, with a prize offered for the most realistic representation. Vulgarity had no appeal for Attilio and pornography did not fit into his scheme of beauty. He thereupon declined to follow the example of his prankish classmates. His refusal was met with a barrage of clay directed at him. They chided him for his moral attitude and called him all kinds of uncomplimentary and abusive names. He was so tormented and ridiculed that he cleared his working table and began work at once, determined to make the best model. He was now cheered lustily by his classmates.

At noon that day, before leaving the school building for lunch, the older boys were shrewd enough to destroy their models. Word was passed around and all students followed a similar example, but through some oversight Attilio did not hear the wise counsel of the older boys and innocently covered his model with a piece of cloth and left school for his usual lunch, a bowl of soup at his aunt's home.

Sons of distinguished families from all parts of the world attended the Academy, and it was not unusual for the Academy to be visited by illustrious persons. That day the Japanese Ambassador to Italy arrived unheralded to visit a young Japanese student, son of a wealthy and influential family friend. The Japanese student had gone out to lunch and the secretary of the Academy, in the absence of the President, escorted the eminent visitor through the school. In the main corridor they were joined by Antonio Allegretti, teacher of Attilio's class, who was substituting for the regular professor, Girolamo Masini. It appeared that professional jealousy and considerable animosity existed between Professors Masini and Allegretti, and the very fact that Masini was continually praising Attilio's ability was responsible for a contrary reaction on the part of the substitute teacher, Allegretti.

The secretary of the Academy beckoned Allegretti to lead the way to his classroom. When they entered the classroom, the secretary very proudly directed the Ambassador to Attilio's table to show him the work of the Academy's protege. By this time, the Ambassador had heard many glowing reports of Attilio's artistic prowess, and as a fitting climax to his laudatory comments, the secretary ceremoniously uncovered the modeling table. Allegretti stood petrified while the Ambassador burst into a hearty laugh, apparently enjoying the humor of the situation. When the secretary turned to inspect the model which caused so much laughter, his face reddened deeply with embarrassment and humiliation. What he saw was not the beautiful sculptural composition he had been boastfully praising, but a large, over-sized penis. Profuse apologies were extended to the Ambassador, but he chuckled very good-naturedly.

When the diplomat departed, the secretary made out a re-

port immediately and sent it to the Ministry of Education. Attilio's immediate expulsion was recommended by Allegretti who thought he would avail himself of this opportunity to rid the Academy of the pampered genius.

Fearing that the unfortunate incident might have a serious repercussion in view of the fact that a foreign diplomat was involved, the Minister of Education sent a report to the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Attilio returned to school at twelve-thirty o'clock and went directly to his classroom, having completely forgotten his pornographic model. The model had disappeared—it had been taken to the President's office as evidence of his guilt—so, without giving it further thought, he resumed his regular work.

When the President returned that afternoon, he received a detailed account of what had happened. He was fond of the young man and regretted that the secretary had already communicated with the Ministry of Education with a recommendation for expulsion. He considered the action too drastic.

Before school was dismissed that day, the Minister of Education sent an edict to the President of the Academy expelling Attilio not only from the Academy in Rome, but from every academy and school in the Kingdom of Italy. It became the painful duty of the President to notify him of the expulsion order. When Attilio had heard of the action taken against him he was stunned, and when its portent was fully realized he wept bitterly. It was a high price to pay for the unintentional, but nevertheless, vulgar offense.

He left the school building at once and wandered about in a daze the remainder of the day—he felt terribly alone and abandoned.

His parents were notified of his disgrace, whereupon they immediately dispatched word for him to return home, but the disconsolate lad could not bear the humiliation of reliving the events leading to his dismissal before his family. Instead, he chose to remain in Rome, alone in his misery, in defiance of his parents' wishes.

As the days rolled slowly by, the full realization of his disgrace depressed him. He became sullen and morose — avoided his classmates when he chanced to meet them on the street. In his youthful mind, the comparatively minor offense became disproportionately magnified and preyed upon him unduly. The incident affected his entire personality. His shame made him fear to speak to people lest they, in his distorted way of thinking, might be loath to be seen with him. He considered himself an outcast from society, and this thought so obsessed him that it produced a psychological effect approaching introversion. This attitude toward people is prevalent to some degree today and is evidence of the deep impression which the harrowing episode made upon the young man's personality. It unfortunately wrought immeasurable harm to his sensibilities and brought on a haunting loneliness which was, in later life, descriptively expressed in his statue of *THE OUTCAST* (Plates 47, 48).

In the mood that gripped him, it is easy to understand how Attilio faced his former teacher, Allegretti, on the street one day. Smarting and hurt by the realization that it was Allegretti's insistence on dismissal which had crowned his disgrace, he impetuously spoke his wish that some day they might meet in an art competition that would prove him the more capable artist despite his greater youth. Perhaps the Fates sympathized with him, because a few years later his hope was fulfilled. The two met in a

general competition in Rome. Attilio was awarded first prize; Allegretti — honorable mention.

Word soon got around to his classmates of his expulsion, and they felt remorseful, inasmuch as they were in a large measure responsible. A group of boys was delegated to tell the President of the Academy what had happened, with the hope of winning clemency and possibly reinstatement. The President admired the spirit of the appeal and promised the group to speak to the Minister of Education in Attilio's behalf.

In the meantime, the Minister of Education had sent the Japanese Ambassador a letter of apology, in which he explained the punishment meted out to the young man for his misdemeanor. Following the receipt of the letter, the Ambassador immediately dispatched a message to the Minister urging him to restore Attilio to the Academy, adding that he did not regard the misdeed as a personal affront. Letters in behalf of Attilio were sent to the Minister by the Presidents of the academies of *Belle Arti* and *San Luca*, imploring him to reinstate Attilio.

The expulsion occurred in October; Christmas found the young man still in Rome, wandering listlessly from gallery to museum, visiting the famous art collections. Even with misfortune pressing so heavily upon his mind, his interest in the arts continued unabated. The spirit of Christmastime, so strongly felt in Italy and particularly in Rome, the seat of the Papacy, failed to bring him cheer. He found it easier to live in his self-made world of oblivion. The pealing of church bells in their lofty towers and the happiness of the people about the Holy City failed to arouse in him the spirit of peace so prevalent during the Christmas season.

For the first time in Attilio's life Christmas lacked the sig-

nificance of former years. He could not bring himself to participate in its spirit of religious elevation. At home, Christmas had always brought with it many pleasant associations, and its advent had been awaited with much rejoicing. All these happy memories were now gone, superseded by the discomfoting thought that his formal education in art had come to an inglorious end.

He fervently prayed that the new year would bring him new fortune. He had endured the vicissitudes of a not-too-happy life as courageously as might be expected of a young lad who bore his sorrow with a valiant heart.

Several days after the beginning of the new year, he received a letter from the Academy. It frightened and confused him. What could it possibly mean? Reinstatement? His heart beat so that he feared it might burst from his breast. A choking sensation possessed him. He felt a sudden rush of blood to his face. The letter, finally opened, notified him to appear at the Academy the following morning.

Throughout the sleepless night his mind raced on weird and fantastic thoughts. Could they possibly punish him any more? One thought resolved itself — there was nothing, nothing, that the Academy could possibly do to harm him further. His expulsion, he conjectured, was their final action. But why, then, was he being asked to see the President of the Academy? He answered this question to himself in multitudinous ways, creating hypothetical cases and arguments which he always refuted ultimately for their sheer nonsense. The confused and fatigued mind of the young boy worked desperately trying to solve a problem too complex in its many ramifications.

Dawn found him still awake pondering over a new inter-

pretation of the letter, but later he fell into a restless slumber, not from want of sleep, but from sheer mental exhaustion.

Tired and pale from a troubled night, he appeared at the President's office several hours before the appointed time. He was extremely nervous and fidgety, but waited with patient resolution. When the President appeared, he placed his arm reassuringly about the boy's shoulders and told him that he was happy to welcome his return to the Academy. After begging the President to repeat what he had said, for he could scarcely believe what he had heard, he sank tearfully in a nearby chair. The words of gratitude he tried to blurt out stuck in his throat like so much sand. When he finally regained his composure, he started to thank him again only to be cut short by the President to discourage the veritable flood of oratory the boy was now pouring forth in a burst of happiness.

The President, who was extremely fond of the boy, told him he could join his classmates immediately. He rushed from the office, turned down the familiar corridor leading to his classroom, brushing away the last vestige of his tears, opened the door slowly and entered. The boys rose to their feet and clamored about him noisily, happy to welcome him back to their midst. This display of genuine affection almost compensated, he thought, for the suffering he had undergone. The timid boy was touched by the heartfelt demonstration. When called upon to make a speech, seated precariously on the shoulders of several boys, he simply said, "You can't imagine how happy I am to be back among you." Anxious lest tears betray him before the boys, he went quickly to his old appointed table and sat down. But work for the day was finished in the class, for the excitement had permeated the atmosphere and there was talk, joking and finally a burst of song.

The boy's parents were overjoyed to hear that he had been readmitted to the Academy. His own happiness was now complete, although the damage wrought upon his personality was irreparable. It produced in him a retiring timidity which is still part of the sculptor's personality today.

Yet he bore no animosity towards anyone for what had happened, not even towards Allegretti whom he knew was largely responsible for his expulsion. Probably winning the Rome competition had partly salved his earlier hurt. Many years later, in 1910, when Piccirilli's fame had already been established both in America and abroad, the death of his father took him to Italy with his mother for a visit and rest. He disembarked at Genoa and boarded a train to Rome. During the twelve-hour journey he occasionally walked the length of the train to exercise his travel-tired limbs. While he was passing a compartment on one of his jaunts, a man playing with a child attracted him. To his astonishment, he recognized his former teacher, Allegretti. Having made certain of his identity, he entered the compartment and introduced himself. Allegretti remembered him quite well, and a friendly discussion of past times ensued. Allegretti was then about sixty years old and had been married but a few years. He, also, was on his way to Rome, where he was being considered by the Minister of Education for the Presidency of the Academy of Fine Arts at Carrara. He explained that he had little hope of receiving the appointment as he had a very influential rival. Piccirilli, bearing no malice whatever towards his former teacher, offered to help him secure the appointment. On several previous visits to Italy, the Italian Government had solicited Piccirilli's assistance and advice on important matters pertaining to art. This important contact and the fact that his fame and reputation as a sculptor were well known in

Italy, placed him in a most favorable position to help Allegretti. So certain was he of these important contacts that he assured Allegretti he would unquestionably receive the appointment. On their arrival in Rome they parted the best of friends.

After establishing himself in a hotel with his mother and sister, he went to see the Minister of Education that same day. Allegretti was appointed to the Academy of Carrara, as Piccirilli had predicted.

Considering that Piccirilli was directly responsible for Allegretti's appointment, despite the fact that Allegretti had been the main advocate of his dismissal from the Academy many years before, one obtains a splendid insight into the sculptor's character. When he learned that Allegretti needed help, Piccirilli did not pause to think of the unhappiness he had suffered at his hands. Vengeance was never part of his character and his altruism was well known, even among his classmates, for he had always been willing to share the little he had with those less fortunate. His own poverty undoubtedly taught him humility and kindness. He is still heard to say, "It is easier and nobler to forgive than to be vindictive." His attitude towards others has maintained this same honesty and simplicity, and it is not strange to find these qualities reflected in his sculpture.

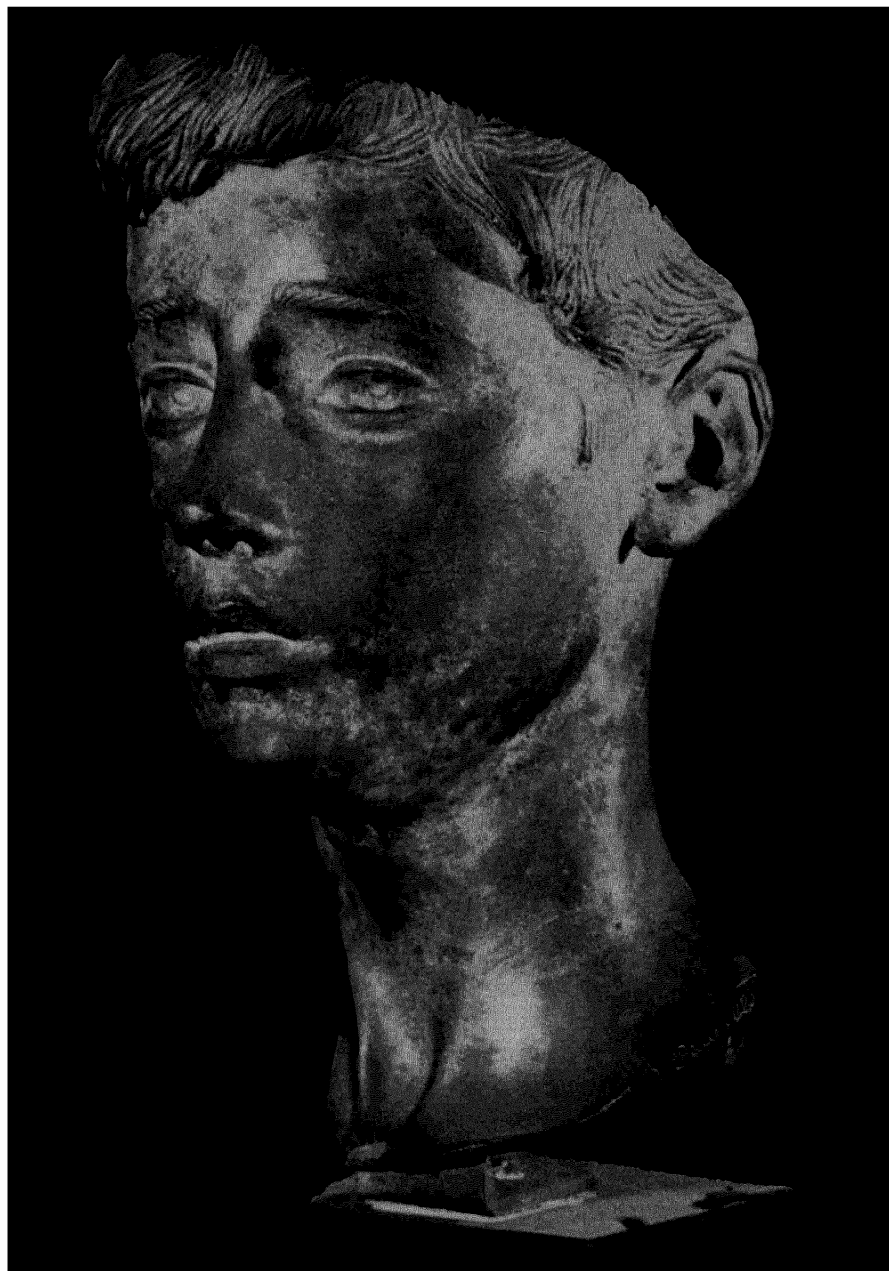
With his return to the Academy, life took on many of its former habits. He continued to live with his gay friend, who still loved his nightly escapades. Attilio plunged into his work with renewed vigor and interest increased by months of idleness. But he did not enter with his former gaiety into friendly school groups—instead he spent most of his time alone, retiring into himself more and more and emerging only when exhausted from work. He never felt completely at ease among his friends, and

found it difficult to enter into their confidence. He could not obliterate from his mind the stigma cast upon him, for it had taken permanent place in his consciousness. He found happiness only when deeply engrossed in his work, in which he lost himself completely.

The winter months in Rome are not particularly cold, but they are dreadfully rainy and damp. Piccirilli, who had not yet acquired an overcoat, was taken very ill. When he had convalesced sufficiently to return to school, his uncle in Rome gave him an old coat which the boy was grateful to wear even though he became an object of ridicule. The coat was many times too large and the sleeves had to be rolled up several times for him to enjoy the use of his hands. It hung from his shoulders in a ludicrous manner and distorted his figure into something humorously grotesque. He himself still laughs at his own ungainly and absurd appearance.

When the month of July came, ending his third year at the Academy, he experienced a feeling of great satisfaction, happy in the thought that he had won redemption by his hard, industrious work. He returned home a more serious and experienced person, sobered by the tribulations of the past school year. His parents noticed the change and thought he had grown much older. Once at home, the atmosphere of friendly understanding and sympathy restored his former cheerfulness. For the first time in many months the calamitous occurrence of the past year was completely forgotten.

The next two years at the Academy were uneventful except for the fact that he spent much time experimenting with new methods of plastic technique. Otherwise his life followed the routine of earlier years. During this time he won several school





ATE 3

The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, Buffalo, N. Y

HEAD OF A BOY

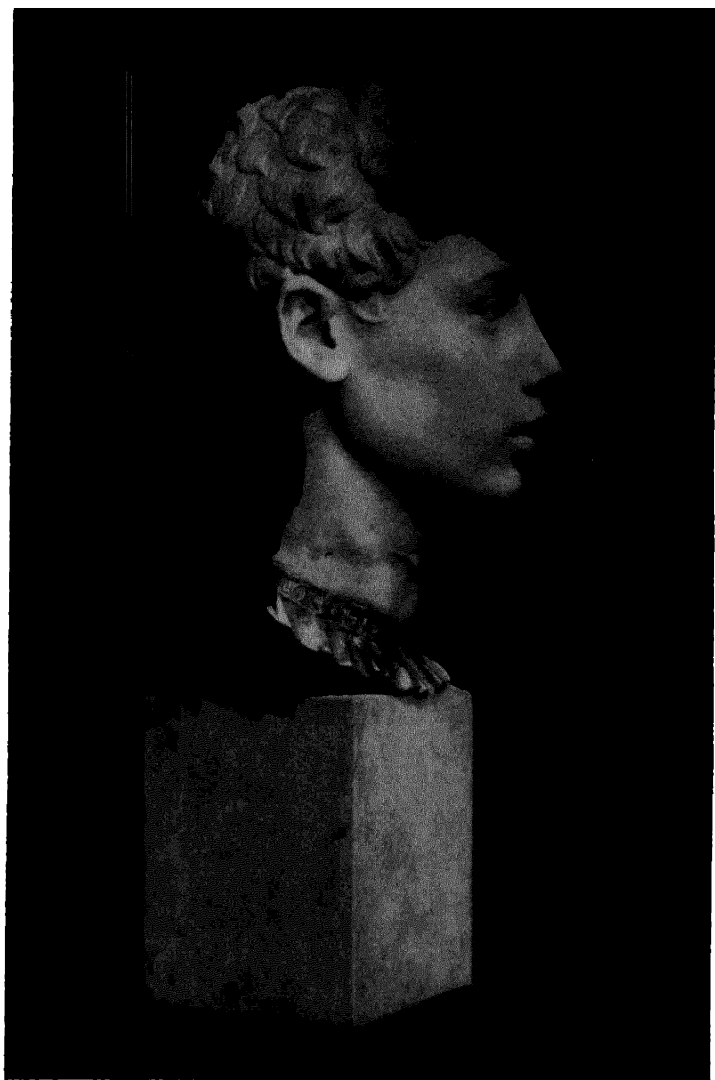


PLATE 4

Collection of the Sculptor

BOY WITH SILVER COLLAR

enough money to provide the family with the essentials for daily subsistence.

Poverty in Italy during this time was widespread. Piccirilli had heard while in Rome of the countless Italians who had migrated to other countries to seek their fortunes. A tremendous exodus from Italy began about 1880. Thousands of families had left to make their homes in France, England, the United States and various South American countries. Between 1870, when the movement began, and the beginning of the Twentieth Century, more than one million people emigrated to the United States alone.

After Piccirilli returned to Massa-Carrara from Rome, where he had heard about the migration of many Italians, he often spoke to his father about the possibilities of going elsewhere. Perhaps establishing the family in another, more prosperous country would be the salvation they had been hoping for, he argued. This thought had already occurred to Piccirilli's father, but it was a momentous decision to make and he wanted more time to consider the advisability and wisdom of such a move.

Piccirilli was deeply concerned with the gravity of the circumstances in which his family unfortunately found itself, when he received his first commission as a professional sculptor, and the necessity of emigrating to another country was completely forgotten, at least for the time being. He felt that perhaps he was still too young to help resolve such important domestic problems, especially in view of the fact that he had been finally recognized as a sculptor. He even declined to participate in family discussions of matters which did not pertain to his commission, so bent was he upon expending all his energies in its execution.

In 1885, at the early age of nineteen, young Attilio was

busily engaged carving his first life-size statue in marble (Plate 1). It was a female figure of an angel intended for the sarcophagus of the family of Count Guerra in the cemetery of Massa-Carrara. The angel stands with apparent indifference before the huge sarcophagus, and holds a heavily fringed drapery aside to reveal the sarcophagus with its names inscribed upon it. The figure of the angel itself, particularly when conceived as an entity apart from its heavy celestial wings, is astounding in its conception. The accomplishment is praiseworthy and shows that this young man of nineteen had a matured gift for sculptural design. His understanding of plastic form and composition is almost incredible for a youth who had recently graduated from the Academy in Rome.

This wholesome, humanistic angel does not portray any feeling of the sacred and immortal spirit of divinities. Piccirilli's angel is a healthy peasant girl more concerned in the normal functions of life than in her role of spiritual guardian. And a young man intensely interested in nature and in the vigor and beauty of life is not likely to fret too seriously with the spiritual character of divine personages. Wings do not always make an angel, and if the reader were to orient himself to see only the figure of the girl, eliminating from his mind the superfluous wings and sarcophagus, he would be deeply impressed by the youthful charm and beauty of the comely maiden and by the young sculptor's grasp and naturalistic interpretation of her earthly virtues.

As a matter of biographical interest, the model was a young peasant girl of sixteen whose father had forbidden her to pose for the sculptor, in whom she had shown considerable interest. After weeks of persuasion on the part of the sculptor and his father, the peasant agreed to allow his daughter to model on condition that she wear a nightgown. The conditions were naturally

accepted, but once the work of modeling began, it did not take the young sculptor very long to persuade her to disrobe entirely. It also became necessary for him to bolt the studio door to discourage frequent visiting and inspection by the girl's father.

The sculptor remembers, perhaps too vividly, the difficulty he had with his model. She was a young, healthy girl, handsome and beautifully formed. Her body and protruding breasts were so firm and attractively defined, despite the nightgown she at first wore, that the artist could not bring himself to assume the proper mood for the appropriate rendition of the figure. He became so disturbed at times that he was unable to work for days. He recalls that never in his long career did he experience such trying and virtually impossible conditions of work. With this mental attitude, it is no wonder the angel is so real and life-like. Even the outer garment she wears resembles closely the nightgown which clothed her body and the well-shaped body beneath it is proof that she posed in the nude as well.

Her oval face, with large, expressive eyes, is framed by a mass of wavy hair which falls picturesquely on her shoulders, somewhat resembling a modern coiffeur. Her type can still be seen today in many parts of Tuscany. A slight suggestion of an S-curve adds to her bodily grace and poise — she seems to stand without physical effort.

With this figure, Piccirilli auspiciously begins his career as a sculptor. Although his later and more mature works surpass this figure in conception, idealism, and aesthetic merit, its superlative qualities — evaluating it as a plastic expression rather than a divine representation — can best be measured by comparing it with the work of other great sculptors produced at the age of nineteen.

With his first commission successfully completed, Attilio's interest in moving elsewhere with his family was revived. He implored his father to take the family to another land where it might receive adequate remuneration for its talents. Conditions grew worse each year with no prospects of improving. In desperation, Piccirilli's father finally decided that something had to be done at once if the family was to remain together. He sent Ferruccio to Egypt on a business venture and made provisions to send his other son Furio to London to find a suitable home for the family.

Furio arrived in London in April 1887, and soon found employment with *Farmer and Brindley*, a large sculptural firm which had been commissioned to carve the reredos for Saint Paul's Cathedral. Several months later, Attilio joined his brother. They rented a studio in the Chelsea section, a few doors from the residence of the Scottish author, Thomas Carlyle, who had died in 1881. When the altar for Saint Paul's Cathedral was completed, Furio went to Scotland, where he was engaged by a wealthy Scotsman, John MacNeish, to carve architectural decorations. During this time Attilio remained in London trying desperately to secure employment, with little success. In order to create a better impression on prospective employers, he purchased a pair of striped trousers which he wore with some uneasiness in his quest for a position. He soon realized that the two pounds sterling he had paid for the trousers could have been used with better results had he spent the money on food.

By this time, Furio had earned enough money to send for his family. Having disposed of the entire household furniture, the Piccirilli family left Massa-Carrara and arrived safely in London in the early part of December, 1887. Furio returned to London

for Christmas, where he spent the holiday with his family in its Chelsea studio.

During several months of forced idleness which followed, Attilio modeled a portrait head of his younger brother, Getulio (Plate 2), which was later cast in bronze. The well-defined head is a sympathetic characterization of a boy, harmoniously combining the physical and spiritual attributes of youth. It is a handsome, well-proportioned head, refreshingly charming in its self-contained attitude and refined dignity. Its universality extends, as it should, beyond the limits of portraiture — it is intended as a portrait head of youth expressed through an idealistic portrait of the young boy. This charming head has had such wide public appeal that the sculptor used it as a prototype for a series of heads in bronze and marble which may now be found in many private collections and museums. Notable among these heads is the bronze HEAD OF A BOY (Plate 3), in the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, and another head in marble known as GIULIANELLO, fashioned in the traditional style of a Roman youth, is in the private collection of Mrs. C. Nichols Greene of Boston. A second copy of GIULIANELLO is owned by the sculptor. Still another variation of the same theme is the BOY WITH THE SILVER COLLAR (Plate 7).

Mr. MacNeish, who had made several voyages to the United States, showed unusual interest in Furio's work and advised the young sculptor to go to America to seek his fortune in this new land of boundless opportunities. The suggestion appealed strongly to Furio, and when he expressed his willingness to go, the Scotsman offered to finance his journey to America with his brother, Attilio.

Overjoyed and palpitant with excitement, the brothers broke the news to the family at dinner that same evening. Attilio's

father realized that perhaps going to America would be the solution to all his economic problems. He wished his sons Godspeed, and on April 2nd, 1888, Attilio and Furio left London for Liverpool, where they booked passage on the freighter "New England" bound for the United States.

In the meantime, Ferruccio had met a Rumanian-Jew in an Italian restaurant in Egypt whose brother, Oscar Osterman, was living in New York. He had heard his friend Osterman say that if he had money he would go to America where, according to letters he had received from his brother, money was abundant and fortunes easily made. Ferruccio had enough money to buy two steamship tickets, one of which he offered to Osterman, and without bothering to notify his family of his plans, he too sailed for the United States.

Attilio and Furio, after a long and uneventful voyage, arrived at the Battery in New York on the morning of April 16th, 1888. Imagine their surprise when they learned that Ferruccio had preceded them to America by several weeks. When they arrived in New York, the two brothers had exactly twenty-five cents between them, which they spent for sandwiches and beer.

Attilio was so greatly impressed by the new world that he completely forgot the hardships and poverty he had known. Had he not heard that in America hard work was justly rewarded and it was a land of equality and opportunity? America meant infinitely more to him — it meant a new home and the beginning of a new life, and he was anxious to contribute whatever he could to the new American culture which had begun to take shape from the heterogeneous cultures of the old world. America meant all

he had hoped for and he thanked the Almighty God for having delivered him safely to its shores.

When his passport was finally inspected by custom and immigration authorities, he asked to be taken to the Federal Building where he applied for his citizenship papers. He was determined to become a good American and to show his gratitude and loyalty to his newly adopted country.

On his way to the Federal Building, Attilio noticed that the men and women he passed on the street were exceptionally well-dressed, and he naively inquired, in his poor English, whether it was a holiday. He explained to a stranger, that in his home town men shaved and wore clean shirts only on holidays. When he was assured that it was not a holiday, but a regular working day, and that it was customary and expected of men to be shaven and clean, he was greatly impressed by American luxury.

Attilio and Furio went to live at Oscar Osterman's home on East Houston Street, where Ferruccio had been making his home since his own arrival in New York. Mr. Osterman was a generous and hospitable man and was deeply grateful to Ferruccio for bringing his younger brother to America. Two weeks later, Osterman introduced the Piccirilli brothers to a steamship agent, who agreed to sell them six steamship tickets on installment. The agent, considering the brothers a good risk, gave them the tickets without a down payment. The tickets were immediately dispatched to London and in the first days of June the entire family arrived in Boston on the English steamer "Roman." From Boston the family proceeded to New York by steamer and the Piccirilli family was happily reunited. Attilio and his brothers had already rented a large apartment on East Fifty-fifth Street near the East



Collection of Mrs. Alfred Milet, N. Y.

IOLE

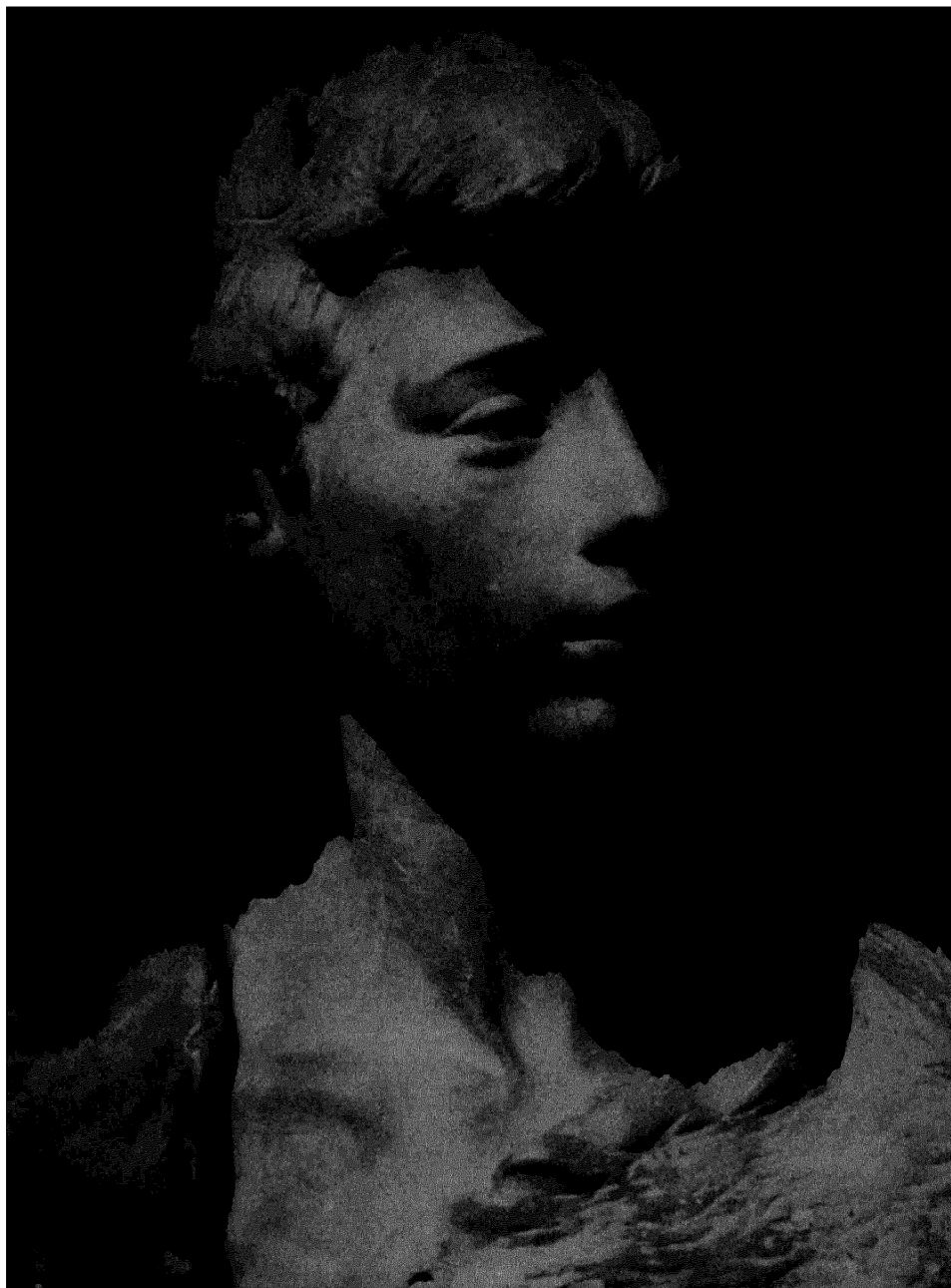


PLATE 6

Collection of the Sculpt

YOUNG SAINT JOHN



PLATE 8

Collection of the Sculptor

DANCING FAUN

River, in anticipation of their arrival, and there the Piccirillis made their first home in America.

The family found itself happily together but without funds and deeply in debt. A large garland of flowers carved in marble, which they had brought from Italy, was sold for ten dollars to *Adler's Monument & Granite Works*, an art dealer on East Fifty-seventh Street in New York City, to purchase food. They refused, however, to sell a very valuable crucifix carved in boxwood by the Italian baroque sculptor, Anton M. Maragliano (1664-1741), which has been in the possession of the Piccirilli family since the latter part of the Eighteenth Century.

Gold trinkets, bracelets, and other jewelry belonging to Mrs. Piccirilli had to be pawned to provide food and other essentials for the large family. Attilio's only pair of trousers, the striped ones he had purchased in London for two pounds sterling, was sold by another brother for two dollars. During this time a fire broke out in another apartment on the same floor as Piccirilli's apartment. When Attilio heard the screeching, horse-drawn fire apparatus, he rushed to the window and saw firemen hurrying into the building. He quickly surmised why they had been summoned and was petrified lest it become necessary for him to leave the building in his long underwear. Fortunately, however, the fire was quickly extinguished. The incident brought Attilio's plight forcibly to his family's attention, and a few days later he was provided with a new pair of trousers.

While he was interned in his Fifty-fifth Street apartment without trousers, he began work on a portrait head of his baby sister IOLE (Plate 5), which is more fully considered in Chapter X. The idealism of her large, expressive eyes is quickly noticeable. She seems to look out into a strange world with an

inquiring curiosity which is typically child-like. This gentle, little lady, with her delicate and sensitive qualities, together with the superb portrait head of GETULIO (Plate 2), forecasts the promising future of the sculptor.

Several months after the family's pawnable objects were disposed of, Ferruccio and Furio quite unexpectedly found employment with the *Perth Amboy Terra Cotta Company* in New Jersey, designing architectural decorations.

The first year in America was a trying one for the Piccirilli family. It was marred by their inability to find employment and by the struggle to keep the family fed and sheltered. During this period of hardships and insecurity, Samuel Adler, founder of *Adler's Monument & Granite Works*, commissioned Giuseppe Piccirilli, Attilio's father, to model the portrait statue of a young lady for a grave monument. The twenty-one year old girl had died suddenly as she was receiving her college diploma at commencement exercises. A large room behind Adler's office on East Fifty-seventh Street was used as a studio, and it was here that the life-size statue was modeled with Attilio's assistance.

The commission, paid in advance, was worth sixty dollars, and was spent long before the monument was completed. To carve it in marble, the elder Piccirilli, assisted by Attilio and Masaniello, was paid ten dollars a week, no princely compensation surely, for the services of the father and his two sons. But it was an opportunity they welcomed.

Samuel Adler was so favorably impressed by the fine artistry of the Piccirillis that he employed them regularly thereafter to carve angels, portrait busts, lions, medallions, plaques, and architectural decorations. Many of their monuments were commissioned by various Central and South American countries,

including the Dutch West Indies. Their most important monument in South America was carved for the President of Venezuela, General Cipriano Castro, who had a shrine built in Caracas, in memory of his mother.

Their employment with Adler's was their first in America, and, although they were grateful for the opportunity given them, this kind of work did not particularly appeal to the Piccirillis. Their modest earnings, scarcely enough for food and shelter, at least enabled them to keep the family together.

Samuel Adler had three sons—the oldest was Attilio's age—who helped their father in his large business establishment. During periods of inactivity in the day's business routine, the three young men would go into the work shop, where they had set up shooting targets, for pistol practice.

Giuseppe Piccirilli and his sons could not imagine what had happened one day when two of the Adler boys entered the studio unseen and, without warning, began to shoot at the pistol targets. The Piccirillis hurried frantically out of the path of fire, too startled to evaluate the situation. Even after scampering to a place of refuge, behind the apparent safety of standing statuary, there was always the danger of a bullet ricocheting from the target or wall. These dangerous interruptions continued to upset their equilibrium, but it was not long before they became conditioned. Later, they came to look upon these shooting episodes as respites from their work, often providing good entertainment as well, with the older Adler contributing to the amusement unknowingly. When his boys slipped unnoticed from the office, their absence was almost immediately announced by pistol fire coming from the back room. Infuriated, he would rush out of his office into the work shop, where work had already ceased,

to up-braid his sons violently, but, being a gun fancier himself, he would invariably try his eye with a few shots and before long a spirited competition followed between father and sons.

Mr. Adler was an even-tempered man who could not remain angry very long, and everyone liked him for his amiability. *This friendly association with Adler's began in 1888, the year the Piccirillis came to America, and has continued since then despite the deaths of Samuel Adler, founder of the firm, and Giuseppe Piccirilli, founder of the Piccirilli Studio.*

Attilio took occasion during a period of unemployment from Adler's studio to make a plaster head of YOUNG SAINT JOHN (Plate 6), using Getulio as his model. The beauty of this head rests in its benign qualities and spiritual expressiveness. The delicate bone structure of the thin, oval head and the youthful face are sharply contrasted with the coarser texture of the hair and the mantle thrown casually about the shoulders exposing the neck. His kind expression of peace is divine in spirit, although the slightly parted lips, pulsating with life, give the youthful Saint John a mortal quality.

Eighteen months after the Piccirilli family had arrived in New York, it decided to open its own studio. There were few commissions to be had and little money was realized on those that were available because the bulk of the profit generally went to the art dealer. Besides, they would never be able to establish their name in the art world if they continued to dissipate their energies by executing commissions solicited from art dealers. They were anxious to make their reputation among sculptors and not particularly among art dealers who exploited them. With this thought in mind, they rented a stable on Sixth Avenue and Thirty-ninth Street in New York City and converted it into

an ample studio. A large sign in bold letters reading **PICCIRILLI BROTHERS, SCULPTORS**, was hung conspicuously outside.

It became the first studio to import expensive marbles from various parts of Italy, and it was not long before the reputation of the Piccirilli brothers as stone carvers spread throughout the country and brought them many commissions. *Within one year they had repaid every personal and business debt. The advice of Mr. MacNeish, the Scotsman, had proved true — America was a land of boundless opportunities.*

Sculptors in America began to realize that the Piccirilli brothers were not mere stone cutters, but able sculptors. During the early phases in the development of American sculpture, very few sculptors possessed the technical ability to carve their own compositions in marble or stone. It was often necessary, particularly during this period, for sculptors to send their clay or plaster models to France or Italy to be cut in stone. Oftentimes, sculptors with commissions for very large monuments would go abroad to plan, design and execute their monuments with the able assistance of French or Italian sculptors. Consequently, it was not surprising to find the greatest men in American sculpture grasping the opportunity to send their clay and plaster statues to the Piccirilli Studio instead, where they were expertly transcribed in stone or marble.

Piccirilli's introduction to Daniel Chester French (1850-1931) was occasioned by a commission which French had entrusted to Charles Niehaus (1885-1935). French had modeled a portrait bust in clay of a well-known Bostonian and later commissioned Niehaus to cut it in stone. Niehaus, for some unknown reason, could not bring himself to begin the work. When one year had passed without progress, French became insistent. Niehaus, in

despair, sent the unfinished marble, which Attilio had "pointed" for him a year before, to the Piccirilli Studio where it was summarily completed by Attilio.

"Pointing" is a process used for transcribing a plaster model into marble, a process known as early as classical antiquity. The entire surface of a plaster model is marked by the sculptor with a series of points, or *puntelli*. These points are then mechanically transferred to corresponding positions on a block of marble with a pointing machine. Holes are then drilled into the marble to a depth corresponding to similar points on the plaster model. The marble is then cut away until the long drill holes are reduced to mere points on its surface. With this process completed, the marble has as many points on its surface and in exactly the same locations as the points on the plaster model. The statue is then considered completed except for the finishing touches, that is, the "working" of the surface to remove the "pointing" marks and to give it the desired texture.

Most sculptors allow their assistants to transcribe the plaster into the marble copy. Often a sculptor's work ceases completely with his plaster model, and the marble original, which bears his name, is frequently not even touched by his hand, or at best, the work with his own hands is limited to the finishing touches. Such a method of reproducing statues in marble or stone has been severely criticized and may be responsible for the lack of warmth and feeling in much of our modern sculpture. A more extended discussion of this problem appears in Chapter VII.

When French heard that Niehaus had given the bust to Piccirilli to complete, he went immediately to his studio, where he found Attilio at work on a series of bas-reliefs which amazed French with their simplicity and artistic charm. For the next

thirty-five years, the Piccirilli brothers carved every statue, bust, bas-relief, and monument French designed, including the colossal figure of Abraham Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial in the nation's capitol. During countless visits to the Piccirilli studio, French became an ardent admirer and intimate friend of the Piccirillis. It was he who, in a large measure, was responsible for the recognition which the Piccirilli brothers earned by their hard work, honesty, dependability, and artistic genius. French introduced the brothers to the most famous men in American art; John Quincy Adams Ward (1830-1910), Olin Levi Warner (1844-1907), Paul Wayland Bartlett (1865-1925), and Frederick W. MacMonnies (1863-1937), Augustus St. Gaudens (1848-1907), were but a few of the sculptors who had become associated with the Piccirilli family of master sculptors.

Piccirilli designed the DANCING FAUN (Plates 7, 8), one of his early statues, in 1895. It is the first marble statue he carved in America, and stands four and one half feet in height. In this statue, Piccirilli has coalesced grace and idealism with extraordinary skill and captured a rapturous attitude of joy, symbolizing youth and gaiety. Physical exuberance and exultation emphasize the jovial expression of the well-balanced and carefully executed figure. The simple attitude conveys the illusion of motion with satisfying adequacy, and the uplifted, outstretched arms carry the rhythmic beat of the castanets. Motion is passively stated and the rhythm of the dance is expressed through the linear design of the body.

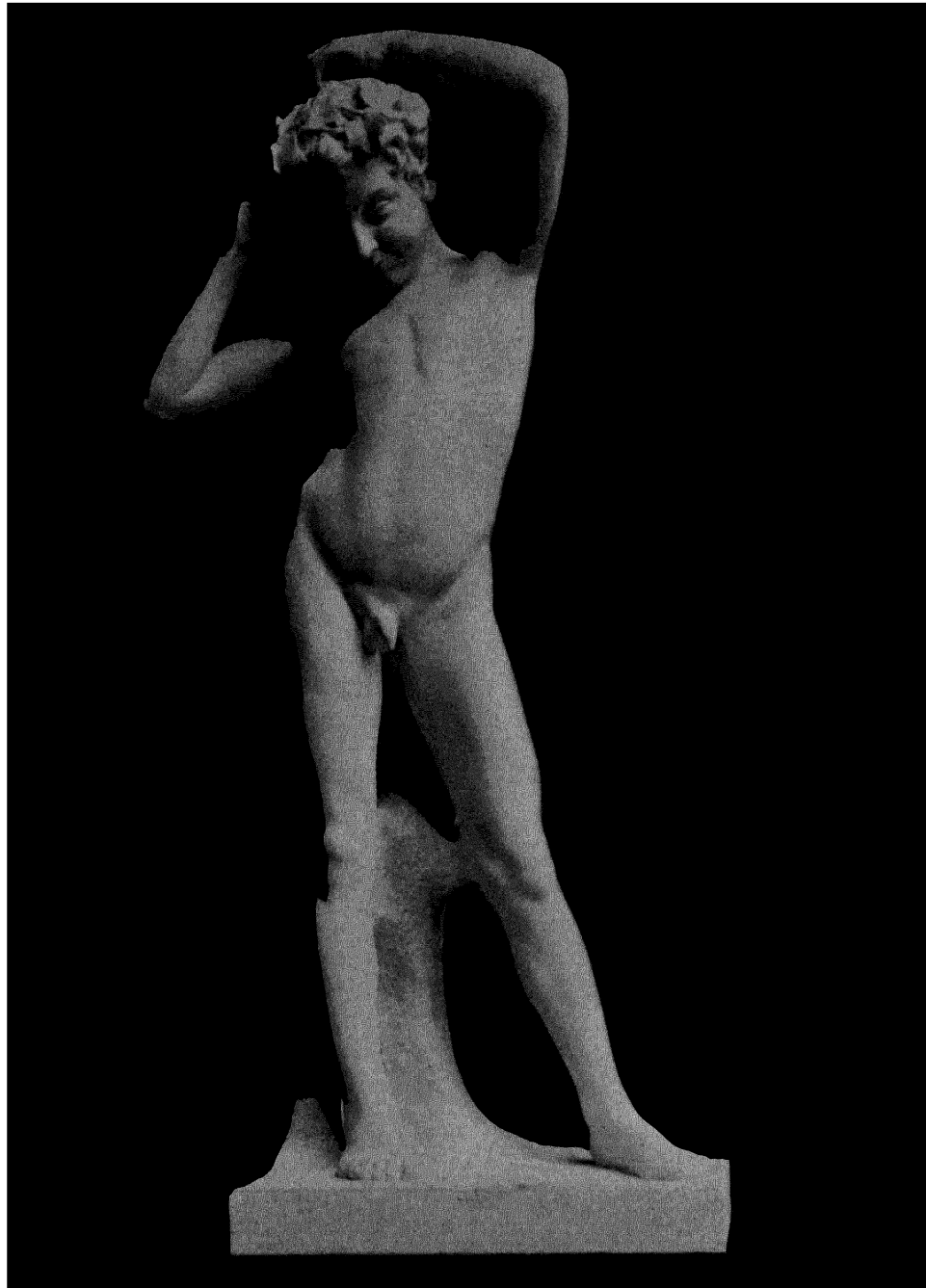
The mood and whimsical pose of the DANCING FAUN are pleasant expressions of the sculptor's imagination. In an effort to express the dance, he came dangerously close to disorganizing the composition of the statue by extending its arms too far from the body. When the figure was exhibited at the Buffalo Pan-

American Exposition in 1901, it was awarded the Bronze Medal.

Another statue conceived in the same informal and delightful manner is the **YOUNG FAUN** (Plate 9), designed in 1898 and considered more fully in Chapter VI. A marble copy of this figure was acquired in 1930 by Mrs. William C. Eustis of Washington, D. C., daughter of former Vice President of the United States, Levi Parsons Morton, and one-time Governor of New York. A bronze replica was placed in the garden of the Governor's Mansion, Richmond, Virginia, in 1932. It was awarded the Silver Medal in 1902 at the South Carolina Interstate Exposition, Charleston, S. C.

For two years the Piccirilli family maintained its studio on Thirty-ninth Street. In 1890, Mrs. Piccirilli was taken seriously ill and was advised by her physicians to go to the country. At this time, the population of the Bronx did not exceed 60,000 inhabitants—it was considered a suburban community by those living in Manhattan. It was a land of green meadows and hills, densely populated with trees, and the air seemed pure and fresh. It was ideally situated as a country place, not too far from the bustling business centers of Manhattan. The Piccirilli family did not wish to leave the city, and soon moved to a lonely house standing on East 142nd Street at the corner of Brook Avenue. A wooden shed adjoining the house was rebuilt as a work shop, where the brothers continued their work as professional stone cutters.

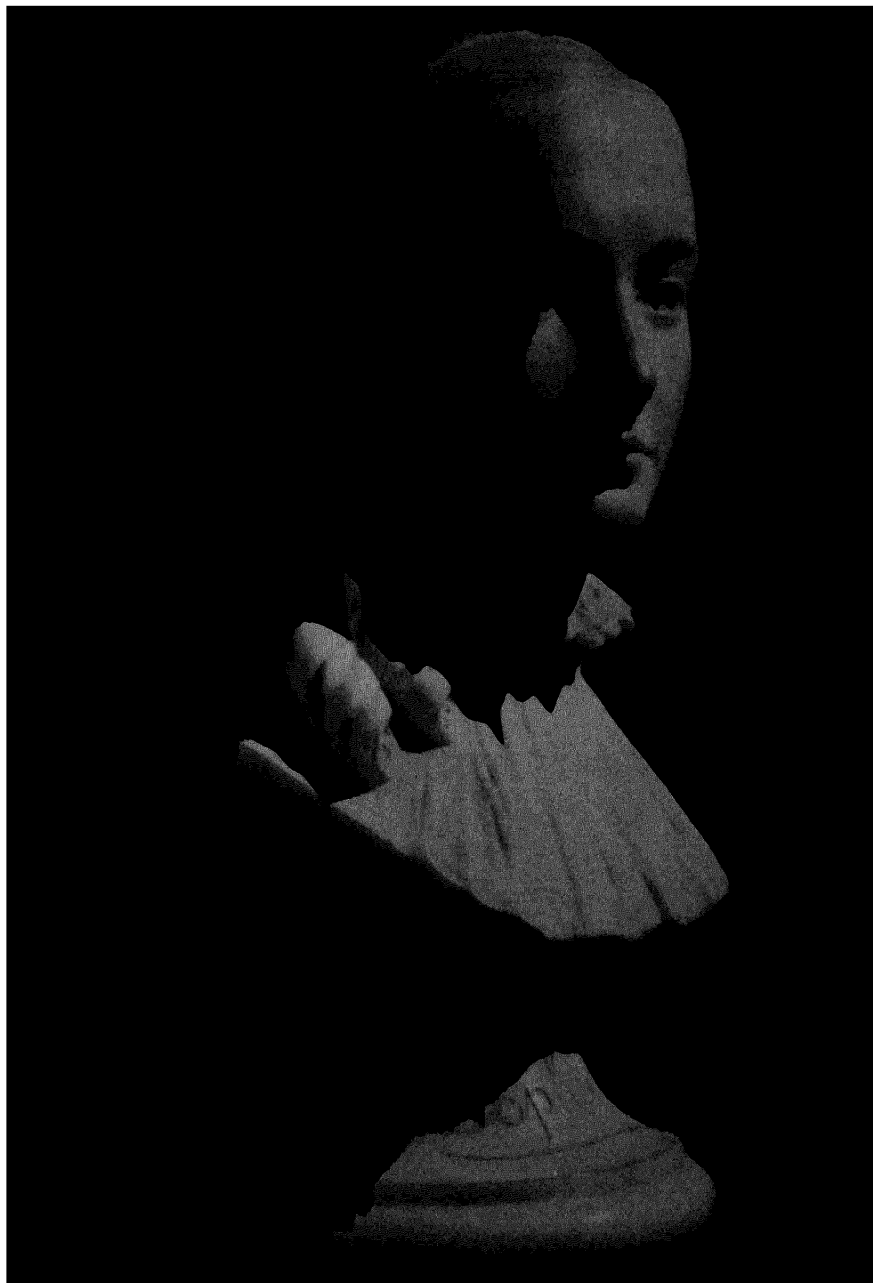
A short time later, the family purchased the farm land on East 142nd Street between Brook and Willis Avenues upon which three buildings were erected—one for the family's living quarters, the other two for studios. The studios, a landmark in



TE 9

Collection of Mrs William C Eustis, Washington, D C

YOUNG FAUN



LA1F 10

H Sophie Newcomb Memorial College, Tulane University, New Orleans,

HARRIOTT SOPHIE NEWCOMB

New York City, are the largest in America. It is the only studio in America resembling a Florentine *bottega*, after which it was obviously designed. Thousands of people from all walks of life, including Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson, Presidents of the United States, have visited it since its construction.

About a year after they were settled in their new studio, in 1893, Attilio carved an heroic figure of CHRIST in white marble for the Church of S. Francis Xavier in New York City. The huge figure, wearing a long open mantle which falls gracefully from the shoulders, is impressive and awe-inspiring. It stands with divine grace and humility above the altar of a chapel near the transept of the church.

With the enlarged facilities of the new studio, the Piccirilli brothers were in a more favorable position to complete their numerous commissions and to accept others which poured into the studio during the next few years.

In 1886, Josephine Louise Newcomb, of the wealthy and aristocratic Newcomb family of New Orleans, provided for the creation of a liberal arts college for women at Tulane University to serve as a perpetual memory to her only child, Harriott Sophie Newcomb (1855-1870), for whom the college was named.

In 1895, after the H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College had been erected, the Newcomb family, on the recommendation of Daniel Chester French, commissioned Piccirilli to execute four portrait busts for the new college. These portraits, which were carved between 1895 and 1906, show the same spiritual and intellectual expression, and the same power of incisive characterization which Piccirilli manifested in the earlier portraits of his own brother and sister (Plates 2, 5).

The first in this series of portraits, that of the fifteen-year-old H. Sophie Newcomb (Plate 10), was carved in white marble in 1895, and stands on a circular pedestal on which the name SOPHIE has been incised.

The portrait is a humane understanding of a young lady, revealing the charm and femininity of approaching womanhood. The severe simplicity of the costume, carefully subordinated and limited to a plaited ruche at the neck of the dress, calls particular attention to the face. Her coiffure is bound by a hair-ribbon, and several locks of hair, directly behind the exposed ears, curl gracefully to the shoulder. Large, expressive eyes and sensitively shaped lips suggest her delicacy and sensibility. The pure physical qualities of her personality are sympathetically described, and her excellent breeding is demonstrated by her poise. Radiation of atmospheric light from the white marble clarifies and defines the portrait.

Another portrait of the same girl, intended for the chapel of the college, was commissioned ten years later. This portrait possesses all the amenities and fine qualities of the first and is, in some respects, even superior. In this portrait, for instance, the sculptor includes the shoulders, adding immeasurably to its illusion of reality.

The third portrait is that of WARREN NEWCOMB (Plate 11), father of Sophie, and is garbed in the costume of the late Nineteenth Century. He is impressive in appearance, somewhat resolute in attitude, and extremely dignified in manner.

No one will doubt the strength of character this portrait embodies. He is shrewd, and his bearing is striking. Piccirilli's portrait of Warren Newcomb is a record in stone of the man's

mental, moral, and spiritual faculties. It is an exposition of the man's personality as revealing as it is possible to portray. The physical interpretation of the portrait is subordinate to the character of the man, which exposes itself at once to the spectator. The sculptor goes beyond the external image to explore and reveal his inner being. Here again, the artist has effectively included the shoulders to the waist. A portrait head which stands alone on a pedestal is never as convincing and satisfying a portrayal of life as one which includes a greater portion of the body. In this piece of sculpture, the modeling is precise and the contours are simple and sharp in outline. Technically, it is superb. The nuances of light-and-shade create interesting surface patterns which change when viewed from different aspects. Surface textures are also varied to produce more interesting effects. This life-size portrait bust is an excellent and revealing conception of the man's nature.

When Piccirilli began work on the last of the Newcomb portraits, that of JOSEPHINE LOUISE NEWCOMB (Plate 12), the resemblance of this aristocratic old lady to his own mother amazed him. He was so pleased and delighted at the astonishing similarity that, when he completed the portrait of Mrs. Newcomb, he decided to keep it for himself, naming it MOTHER (Plate 13), although it really was not a true portrait of his mother. Then, using the portrait he called MOTHER as a model, he began work on a second portrait of Mrs. Newcomb. The beauty of the figure he carved may be attributed to his association of Mrs. Newcomb with his mother.

The fine, oval head with its simple coiffure, the refined and delicate features of the face, the kindly and sympathetic expression of the eyes, the well-shaped brows and elegant nose,

and the nobility of expression, collectively produce the beautiful portrait of this handsome and distinguished aristocrat. Temperance and benevolence are inextricable in the artist's conception of Mrs. Newcomb. This portrait is a glorification of the loveliness of old age. It is a masterful characterization through which the artist conveys his own feelings.

The physical deformities of old age are reduced to an absolute minimum, and emphasis is placed on maturity, kindness, and the charm which old age brings. She is dressed in a simple costume with a plaited rouche and moderately puffed sleeves. On her breast rests a small crucifix to relieve the severity of the costume. The hair is carefully groomed and its arrangement helps to repeat the graceful curve of the well-shaped head. The thin lips and fleshy jowls are the only reminders of advanced years—the flesh is not loose and flabby, and the wrinkles of the face are almost wholly eliminated to avoid marring the attractiveness of the face. The eyes are well-set, handsomely shaped, and deeply cut. One can see pride in the poise of the head which adds dignity to the portrait, and her stateliness is further enhanced by the delicacy of her long, lean face which holds the attention of the observer. Piccirilli has demonstrated his skill as a creative artist and portraiturist.

Ostentation, affectation, and refined superficiality, extrinsic qualities of character, are indulgences which the sculptor is careful to avoid. Aside from purely aesthetic considerations, Piccirilli believes that the success of a portrait as a work of art depends upon whether the artist has given the observer an insight into the absolute requisites of character and personality. Piccirilli's success in this regard is apparent.

The illusion of life is firmly established in the exquisite

portraits of the Newcomb family which seem to be enveloped in an atmosphere of every-day existence. There is a delightfully human touch in all of these portraits, a mark of reality and consciousness which the artist understands so well and expresses so efficaciously. These portraits are living beings, embodying distinctive personality traits, and impregnated with their fine qualities of mind and matter to create an impression of life. One can hardly expect more of mere marble!

While Piccirilli was at work on the Newcomb portraits, he chanced to browse through an art publication which contained notices of sculptural competitions held in various parts of the country. He read an announcement of a competition for a monument contemplated by the City of New Orleans. Announcement was made that two hundred and fifty dollars had been allotted to each of three sculptors, among whom was Herbert Adams, to defray the cost of making plaster models for the proposed JOHN MCDONOGH MEMORIAL MONUMENT.

Several days later the chairman of the committee sponsoring the monument received a letter from Piccirilli and his brother, Furio, requesting permission to enter the competition. At the behest of several prominent New Orleanians — among whom were Mrs. Josephine L. Newcomb, Mrs. T. G. Richardson, wife of the founder of the Tulane University School of Medicine — the chairman agreed to accept designs from the two brothers with the understanding that they finance their own models and transportation to New Orleans. So confident were the two brothers of winning the commission that they began work immediately on the new monument.

The monument was to be in memory of an eccentric but

interesting personality. John McDonogh, born in Baltimore in 1779, was the sixth child in a family of twelve children. He entered the mercantile business at an early age, and in 1800 he was sent to New Orleans as a representative of his firm. When the Louisiana Territory was purchased by the United States, he fully realized the opportunities which might accrue from the newly acquired land. At twenty-one, this gifted young man, with unusual business acumen and vision, was living in New Orleans and in business for himself. He purchased considerable land in and about that city and soon became one of the leading figures in the rapidly growing community. It was his proud boast, in his later years, that he had never sold one foot of property once he had acquired it.

Although he became a man of great wealth, John McDonogh was known throughout the city for his frugality and parsimony, qualities which made him the target of scathing derision by his associates. He was treated with scornful mirth by his friends and mocked particularly by school children, who threw mud and missiles at him when he was seen walking through the streets of the city. In fact, he was known to walk on occasion as many as five miles to save carfare money. A young Negro boy, one of his few servants, could be seen every morning rowing his master in a dilapidated boat to the city from across the river where he made his home. Even during inclement weather, he continued this means of transportation in order to save the few pennies it would have cost him to take the ferry.

At the time of his death in 1850, his wealth was estimated at more than ten million dollars, a fabulous fortune in that day. This money, with the exception of a few legacies to relatives,

was bequeathed to the City of New Orleans and Baltimore for the "erection of schools for the education of children, regardless of sex, race or creed." The taunting and harrowing cries of the school children who had ridiculed him for his thriftiness were not forgotten in his will, which read in part as follows:

"To you, my dear children, I give my forgiveness for little did you realize that I was saving my money for you. Do remember me once a year by bringing flowers to my grave."

In appreciation of this man's munificence, the New Orleans School Board decided to erect a fitting monument to perpetuate the memory of the great benefactor. This sentiment was approved by the entire city and it was suggested that the gift of an appropriate monument be made by the school children of the city. The children's response and their anxiety to have a share in the gift was unanimous. In five years their penny contributions aggregated ten thousand dollars.

In 1898, competition for the monument was begun. Plaster models of the memorial designed by the three sculptors chosen by the committee were already on exhibition in the City Hall of New Orleans when the models of the two Piccirilli brothers arrived. Thousands of people attended the public review of the models, and they were asked to indicate their choice for the proposed monument. When the cards were tabulated, Attilio's model was declared the overwhelming winner by many thousand votes. The choice was fully approved by the Art Commission as well.

With the award of the commission, Piccirilli decided to go to Italy to buy marble for the McDonogh monument. He

sailed the early part of 1899 with his mother and fourteen-year-old sister who was being taken to Rome to receive her first Holy Communion and Confirmation in the Church of Saint Peter's.

During his stay in Rome he went to see his father's old friend, Stefano Galletti, President of the *Accademia di San Luca* in Rome, an academy whose membership includes the greatest men of all nations and is comparable to the Royal Academy of England and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He learned from Galletti that the nominating committee of the Academy was seriously considering the names of several prominent Americans. Piccirilli was requested to submit the names of three eminent American artists for possible election to the Academy. The names were submitted and many months passed in the evaluation of credentials and in studying the contributions which each man had made to the arts.

Meanwhile, Piccirilli returned to America in the early part of spring, after having gone to the Austrian Tyrol to examine a newly discovered marble, so anxious was he to experiment with new material.

In June 1899, the President of *L'Accademia di San Luca*, on the recommendation of Piccirilli, announced the election of Abbott H. Thayer (1849-1921), painter; Daniel Chester French (1850-1931), sculptor; and Charles F. McKim (1847-1909), of the renowned architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White.

It was the first time in the history of the United States that three Americans were elected to the Italian Academy. The three artists were grateful beyond expression. They wrote to Piccirilli thanking him for the great honor bestowed upon them. French, in a letter dated June 9, 1899, writes, "Permit me again to thank

you for helping to secure for me what I feel to be the highest honor that I have ever received. Congratulations have been pouring in upon me from all sides. If in writing to President Galletti you can add your assurance to mine of the appreciation that not only I but all my friends have of the compliment that has been paid me, I shall be indebted to you."

Piccirilli, with characteristic humbleness, minimized his own part in the election to the Academy of his dear friends and associates. It made him happy to know that these men of merit were rewarded and their achievements justly recognized.

With the excitement of the public announcement of the elections to the Italian Academy over, Piccirilli made preparations to transport the McDonogh Monument to New Orleans, which was complete except for a few minor alterations. When the completed monument was exhibited in the sculptor's studio before it was shipped to New Orleans, it was admired by Daniel Chester French and Augustus St. Gaudens, who visited the studio especially to see the memorial (Plates 14, 15).

What the two sculptors saw was a little girl, dressed in the fashion of the day, which unfortunately dates the monument too well, standing on a stylobate of three octagonal steps upon which rises a circular shaft in the form of a column. She is holding a little boy's hand, supporting him in his elevated position, while he places flowers at the base of McDonogh's portrait bust, which rests above the column.

One would normally expect a boy to help a little girl, but Piccirilli was quick to realize the symbolic possibilities of reversing the usual custom. Besides lending physical support to the barefooted boy, precariously perched on the commemorative

tablet of the monument, the little girl symbolizes the dual role of mother and teacher to whom men look for spiritual and moral guidance.

The children, modeled from two pupils chosen from the McDonogh schools, are placing flowers on the monument, fulfilling a wish which McDonogh had expressed in his will. Both figures are cast in bronze, and are silhouetted against the highly polished stone column.

The psychology of line is used as a means of artistic expression. The action of the figures seems to move around the column in a spiral direction which leads directly to the bust of McDonogh without interruption. A unity is thus achieved which brings the three figures, each one placed at a different level, into an harmonious composition. Although the psychological mechanism which holds the widely separated figures together is not apparent at first, it is felt intuitively by the observer.

A bronze floral wreath, naturalistically conceived, encircles the lower part of the column. It is regrettable that the long dress worn by the little girl makes her appear somewhat absurd today. She seems to share her new devotion with the gracefully poised little boy with serious pride.

Depicting McDonogh's personality traits, which were so basically antithetical, presented a perplexing problem. Despite the sculptor's resourcefulness, the problem puzzled him considerably. Whether McDonogh's avarice and miserly spirit were embodied in his portrait bust, together with his posthumous philanthropic spirit, is best left to the judgment of the reader. It is easy to understand the difficulty of the paradox which the sculptor was expected to transform into something favorably approaching a vir-

tue. Nor would the sculptor consent to debase his art by violating the true character of the man in presenting him in another, but more kindly guise. His problem was to portray the man as he was known to others without resorting to needless flattery, an error too often committed in portraiture. And perhaps, in his anxiety to respect the dominant character as he understood it, something of the benevolent spirit of the man was lost. A bronze portrait bust of Mr. McDonogh was placed in every school by the city government in memory of the philanthropic miser.

Between 1890 and 1900, Attilio was busy cutting marbles for other well-known American sculptors. He disliked the nature of the work intensely; it stifled his own burning desire to create things of his own mind and imagination. Yet, he realized too well that a sculptor must have marble to create, and marble is very costly and beyond the financial reach of most sculptors. In spite of the many shortcomings inherent in the practice of transcribing clay statues into marble replicas for other sculptors, there is a compensating reward in the large fees which able sculptors demand for this type of quasi-literal transcription. And, were it not for this work, Attilio would have been unable to purchase the expensive marbles from which he carved so many exquisite figures of his own.

Mrs. Adeline Adams, well-known writer on American sculpture and wife of the eminent sculptor, Herbert Adams, wrote appreciatively of the Piccirillis in an article "A Family of Sculptors" which appeared in the July, 1921, issue of *The American Magazine of Art*; saying "marble cutting in its advanced stages is interpretation as well as copying, and every sculptor worthy of the name will wish to finish his own marble work. Ow-

ing to commercialism, or to lack of mastery over the chisel, that consummation is not always reached... When it (marble) is set beside the plaster original, one can not help noting that the greater nobility of the marble copy is due not wholly to finer material, but still more to finer artistry. The sculptor who designed the original was less the artist than the carver who put it into marble! A deplorable situation, but surely not the fault of the carver, who owes it to his craft not to outrage fine material. . . . Material counts. Plaster is the drudge, marble the aristocrat."

It is preposterous to suppose that an able sculptor would entrust his plaster model to a mediocre stone cutter for transcription into marble. Obviously, the result would not equal the excellence of the plaster original. On the contrary, a sculptor is more apt to seek the artist whom he greatly admires and whose ability and artistry he respects. Conversely, then, it is not unreasonable to assume that when a sculptor entrusts his model to a capable artist, an artist conceivably even more capable than himself, the result is an improvement over the clay or plaster original. What the result would be, if a mediocre sculptor, willing to pay the price, gave his clay model to a sculptor of higher artistic achievement for transcription, is easy to imagine. The question arises as to whether this practice is to be commended or condemned. Art critics in general speak with strong conviction against this practice, which tends to glorify one artist at the expense of another.

Dr. A. M. Rindge, in her book *Sculpture* (New York, 1929), states that the requirements of sculpture as an art form include (a) idea or subject; (b) emotion content; (c) medium; (d) surface texture; (e) design. Sculpture is, then, a composite expression of all these factors, including volume and proportions.

A sculptor who designs a figure in clay is responsible for the idea, emotional content, and design, but he has no way of indicating surface texture in a medium such as marble — a texture which is largely dictated by the medium itself — if his clay figure is entrusted to another sculptor for transcription. All impressions in sculpture are transmitted through surface-textures which describe the sculptural form of a statue, including its idea, its composition and its intrinsic character, inseparable counterparts of good sculpture. Whatever message is conveyed to the observer must come from the statue's surface which, in its enveloping and integrating function, is responsible for the tactile and retinal stimuli which are experienced in co-ordinated patterns. And, inasmuch as a sculptor cannot indicate a desired surface treatment, the transcriber must necessarily contribute something of his own to the original creation. In such instances, then, the sculptor's clay or plaster model is not wholly completed when it is entrusted to a stone cutter who may or may not improve it, depending directly upon his own creative instincts. Some writers insist that transcribing a statue from plaster to marble is purely a mechanical process not involving artistic skill. Literal reproduction of this kind is humanly impossible and any person who has had the experience and thrill of carving is aware of this fact (Cf. Chapter VII).

It is not difficult to understand why so many prominent sculptors sought the services of Attilio and his brothers. Much of the sculpture produced in America during many years of active stone cutting has felt the magic touch of Attilio's genius.

In 1901, Furio Piccirilli was commissioned to carve a life-size marble of Saint Cecelia for the Jarvis family of White Plains, New York. The statue was given to St. Agnes' Church, New

York City, in memory of a young and only daughter, Anna M. Jarvis, who had died on her twentieth birthday. She was married to a Mr. McElroy on her deathbed.

During the time Furio was working on this statue, Attilio had occasion to see photographs of the beautiful girl who had died so young. He made a study of the photographs and subsequently carved a portrait bust of the young lady in marble.

When Mrs. Jarvis saw the portrait of her daughter she was much impressed, and, inasmuch as the sculptor had carved it as a study, he decided to present it to her. One day, he and his brother Getulio crated the marble bust carefully and placed it securely in their automobile. They drove to Mrs. Jarvis' residence in White Plains with their unexpected gift. When she was informed of their mission she was overcome with joy, and was so pleasantly confused by the coveted gift that she even forgot to thank them in her excitement. She did, however, summon her gardener and ordered him to fetch several heads of lettuce from her garden which she insisted the two brothers take when they departed. They understood her sentiment, but Piccirilli recalls that he never felt more foolish leaving the residence of a wealthy woman with several heads of lettuce tucked away under his arm.

Another portrait bust was commissioned in 1905 by the parishioners of St. Agnes' Church, New York City. This portrait was of the eminent Catholic scholar, teacher and writer, the Right Reverend Henry A. Brann (Plate 16), pastor of the church. The sculptor knew the Monsignor and accepted the commission with much satisfaction.

This life-size study is a humble story of a venerable man who spent his life in the service of God and his people. His broad

knowledge, spiritual exhaltation and piety are effecaciously resolved. This portrait tells of his character, kindliness and humility, and these virtues are brought into relief by the sheer simplicity of design. The portrait of Monsignor Brann stands in a niche in the school auditorium of St. Agnes' Church.

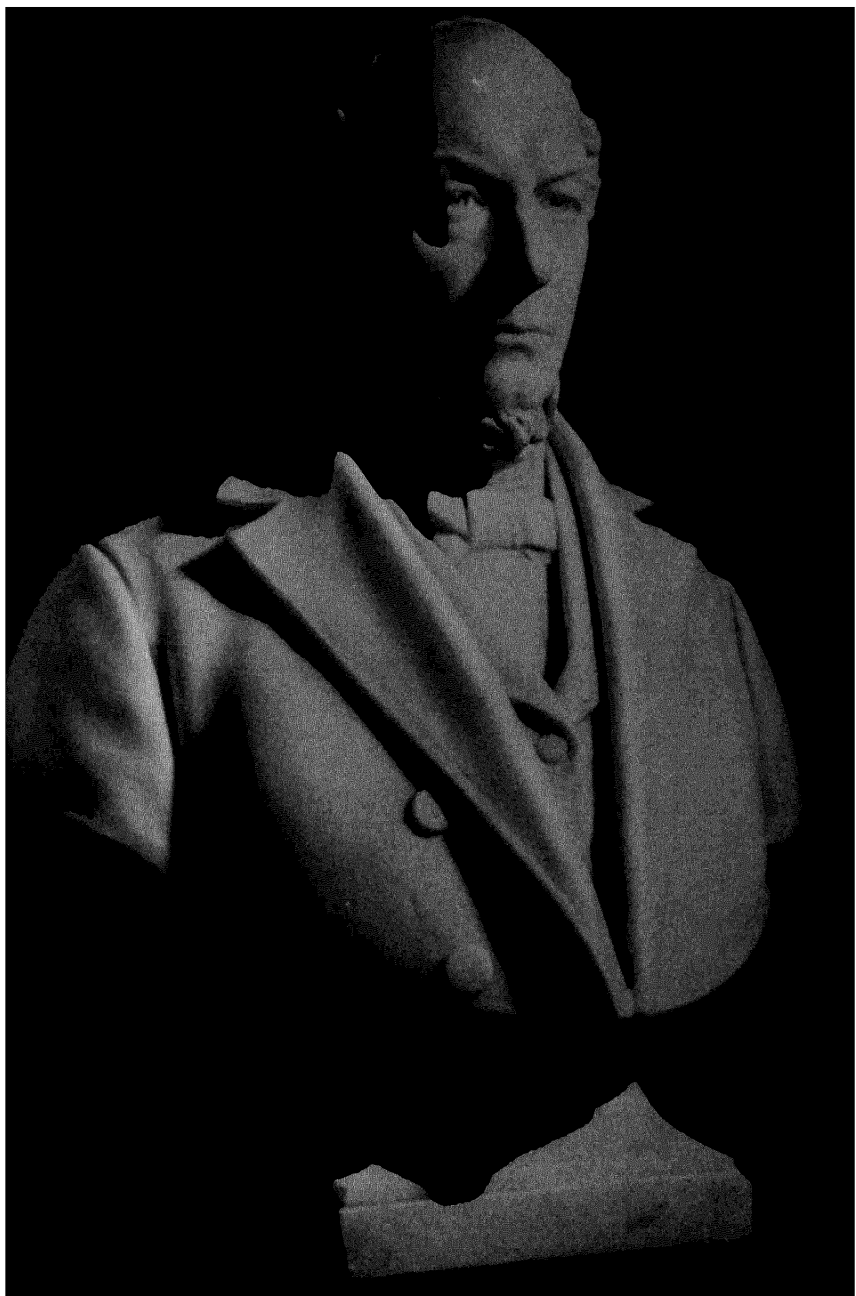
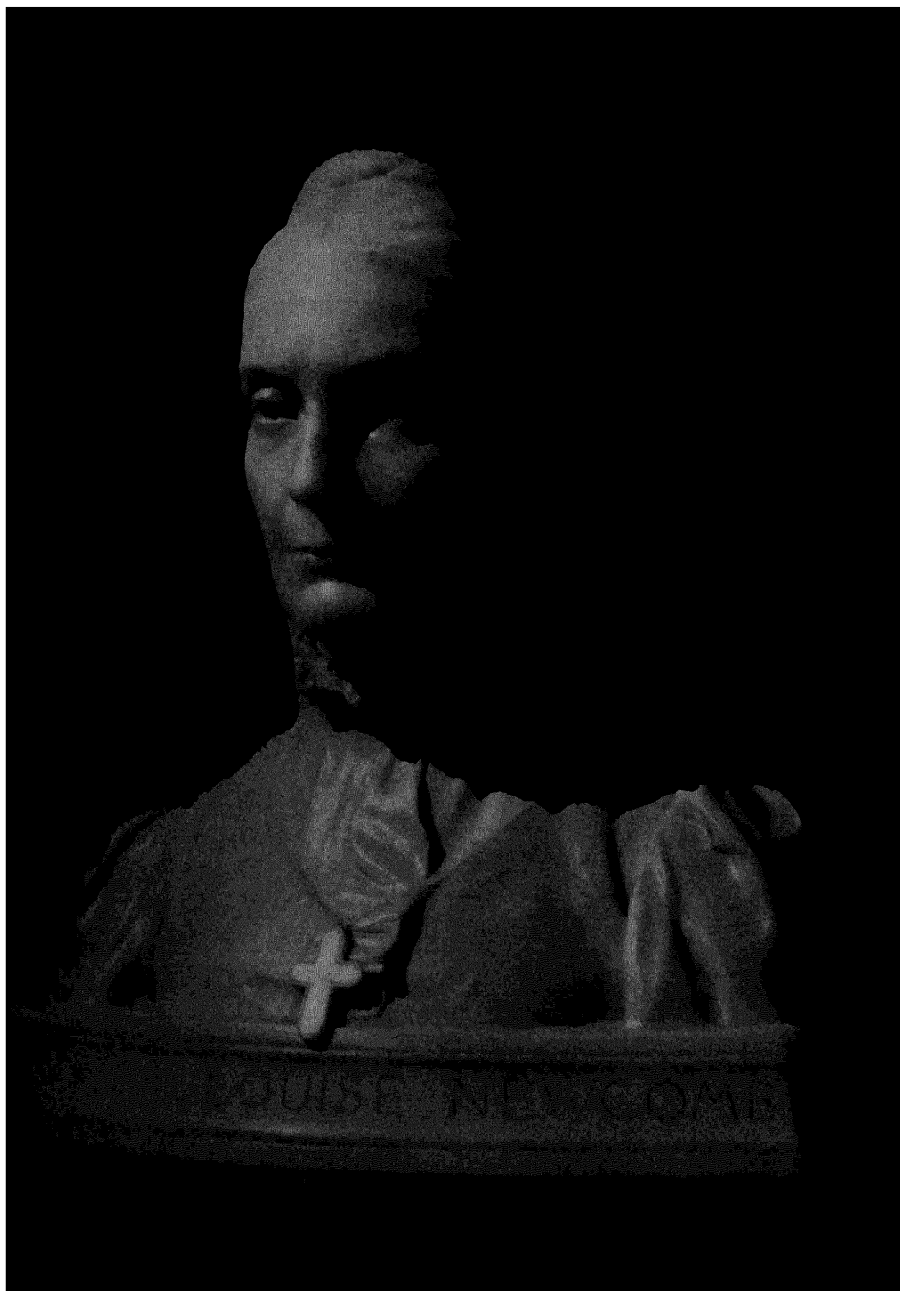


PLATE II

Chapel, H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College, Tulane University, New Orleans, La

WARREN NEWCOMB



LATE 12

Chapel, H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College, Tulane University, New Orleans, La

JOSEPHINE LOUISE NEWCOMB

CHAPTER III

Piccirilli's Marriage to Julia Cavinato — Marital Incompatibility — Death of Giuseppe Piccirilli — Piccirilli's Trip to Italy in 1910 — Death of the Sculptor's Mother — Piccirilli's Interest in F. H. LaGuardia's Political Career — His Friendship with Enrico Caruso — His Relationship with Marquis Carlo Cattapani — Death of LaGuardia's Wife and Child — Piccirilli's Visit to Italy in 1922 — Piccirilli's Separation from His Wife — His Dual Personality

Unhappiness has affected the lives of many men from the beginning of time, driving some to despair and others to great deeds. History records many glowing instances, particularly among artists, musicians, and men of letters. Marriage brought Piccirilli deep sorrow. To escape from this mental and spiritual affliction, he buried himself unstintingly in his work. A resurgent force within him, rebelling against the sadness which enmeshed his soul and deadened his senses, sought expression in terms of the beautiful. This strong creative impulse, which could neither be stifled nor diverted, gradually led him to a new life and ultimate triumph. Piccirilli had the strength to rise above his melancholy to achieve success and recognition.

Psychological changes in personality, induced by antagonistic circumstances, often assert themselves in constructive ways. Thus it is seen that the beauty Piccirilli created in his sculpture

helped him endure eighteen years of unhappy married life. Beauty was made to compensate for the ugly in a struggle for spiritual survival. This is the story of Piccirilli's married life.

There is no man who could not be driven to greater efforts by sympathetic understanding. This applies with much force to persons whose nature is as gentle as Piccirilli's. So treasured an opportunity presented itself to his wife. But, enraptured by her own sisters, interested only in their success and progress, she was unable to appraise the more important role circumstances accorded. Blinded by love of family, she failed to see the making of a new family in her own home. This was the essence of her failure.

Fate decreed a current of events which transformed a happy celibate into a miserable, unhappy groom. The first of these was a casual remark he had overheard in a conversation between his parents who were expressing their grave concern regarding his disinterest in matrimony. He was then forty years old and the only unmarried of six sons. Coincident with this was the continued joshing he was receiving at the hands of Father Joseph Rinaldi, a close family friend, who delighted in watching Attilio squirm during purely impersonal discourses extolling the virtues of matrimony. Combined, these two incidents bore fruit. One evening, approaching the topic in his usual manner and expecting a jesting, non-committed reply, the good Father was totally unprepared for Attilio's daring rejoinder, "Very well, introduce me to a fine woman and I will marry her."

Father Rinaldi was equal to the challenge and a short time later, he introduced the sculptor to Julia Cavinato, a rather charming woman who had devoted herself to an invalid mother and to several brothers and sisters. To say that Attilio fell deeply

in love with Julia during his subsequent courtship would be untrue. Deeply impressed by her untiring attention to her bed-ridden mother, he reasoned that only a person of superlative character would devote herself so completely and unselfishly to her dear ones. The very sentiment he considered noble succeeded in hiding from him the more serious implications inherent in so strong an attachment.

Julia Cavinato and Attilio were married in February, 1906. News of their marriage was received with great rejoicing by her two sisters who had recently completed their musical education in Rome and were preparing to return to America. Their hopes of achieving success in the world of music shone much more brightly now that their sister was married to a sculptor who already had attained prominence. It was suggested, on their arrival, that Attilio invite some of his more important friends to meet the two young ladies. Considering this "suggestion" a distasteful imposition, he at first demurred, but Julia's pleas succeeded in sweeping aside his reluctance and misgivings. Attilio was ever to regret not having taken a more resolute stand because this was the first of many such encroachments. After temporizing as long as he could, the long-awaited event occurred one Saturday evening. The career aspirants sang and played the piano beautifully before twenty invited guests, several of whom were newspaper men. Two full columns appeared the following Monday in the *Morning Herald*, extolling the charm and musical abilities of the young musicians. It was, indeed, a small price to pay for the newspaper publicity which, unfortunately, kindled in them inordinate ambitions.

Soon after her marriage, Julia's elder brother, who was the main support of the Cavinato family, decided to travel abroad,

leaving his two sisters and a younger brother with Piccirilli. During his visit to Italy, he married a young school teacher and upon his return to America, he, too, decided to make his home with Attilio. In less than a year, Attilio had acquired a family of six—no mean achievement.

In this captious and heterogeneous family, Attilio discovered a ray of light and intellectual companionship in his brother-in-law's wife who was sympathetic and a cultured person. It was not unnatural for a congenial friendship to grow up between them. When at home, Attilio would sit with her to read poetry, but of this small pleasure, too, he was soon deprived. He was accused of being in love with this virtuous woman, and as a result, her husband packed their belongings and moved into a house of his own, taking his two sisters with him. John, the younger brother, remained with the sculptor. In a few days, his family dwindled to a mere three, smaller than it had been for some time. In this he found a measure of relief. There were fewer heartaches and less distraction, but no abatement of his unhappiness. Though the family obstacle was removed, their basic incompatibility was not.

In January, 1910, Piccirilli's father was stricken with pneumonia and died in a few days. The sudden death of the elder Piccirilli was a tremendous shock to the family, and considerable time transpired before the proper emotional adjustments were made. Piccirilli's mother, however, never quite recovered, and her health continued to grow worse. Her sons agreed that a trip to Italy might help her recuperate, and a short time after this decision was made, Attilio left New York with his mother, wife and sister. Two weeks later, they arrived at Pietrasanta, a beautiful Mediterranean resort, several miles north of Viareggio,

where the Piccirillis own a comfortable villa. It was hoped that the change of scenery would hasten her recovery. In a few weeks her health improved and Piccirilli returned to America with his wife.

When the sculptor arrived in New York, he received a telegram from Italy announcing that his mother's health had grown seriously worse. Getulio, the youngest brother, booked passage on the next steamer out of New York in a race to his mother's bedside. When he arrived, his mother was dead. Her body was returned to America and she was subsequently buried with her husband in Woodlawn Cemetery, New York City. Above their grave, the Piccirilli brothers erected a beautiful monument, with a replica of the mother-and-child group of the MAINE MEMORIAL MONUMENT as the dominant motive. Many years later, in 1941, in a radio broadcast on Americanism sponsored by the United States Government, Attilio referred to the memory of his mother when he said, "It is when you bury one you have loved in a country's soil that you realize you belong to that soil forever." It was this strongly held sentiment which made the Piccirilli brothers bury their mother in American soil.

The sculptor became more and more retiring as years went by and spent most of his time at his work. When he sought relaxation, which was not very often, he found it in a small group of friends outside of his family, for he and his wife had few friends in common.

Not long after the death of Attilio's parents, his wife decided that since her sisters were "making the grade" as accomplished musicians, it would be better for them to live with her again with the thought that they would meet important people who might further their musical careers, or perhaps make possible

suitable marriages. Imagine Attilio's consternation when they appeared at his apartment, bags in hand, with the announcement that a moving van would follow with their few pieces of furniture and other personal belongings.

In an effort to escape from his domestic prison, Piccirilli availed himself of every opportunity to spend his evenings away from home. He had met Fiorello H. LaGuardia soon after his graduation from New York University's Law School in 1910, and became so impressed with his straightforwardness and fiery personality that the young lawyer was retained to handle the legal affairs of the Piccirilli Studio. Later, when the obscure young man made his first political effort, he sought and received the earnest and active support of Piccirilli, Louis Espresso, a young Republican leader, and others. Piccirilli's interest in politics was, to some extent, an expedient subterfuge to justify his absence from home, although he felt a genuine desire to help the enterprising and dynamic young man whom he deeply admired for his integrity, courage and intellectual honesty.

In the autumn of 1914, Piccirilli took an active part in LaGuardia's first political venture. That year, LaGuardia, who lived on Charles Street in Greenwich Village—a Tammany stronghold—decided to enter the Congressional contest of the Fourteenth District. He was given the Republican nomination because no one else wanted it. It was considered political suicide, in those days, for a Republican to run against Congressman Michael Farley, a popular saloon-keeper and a staunch Tammany man. Piccirilli, together with other admirers, helped to launch the young man on his political career when the Republican Party refused to make any contribution to what was regarded a lost cause.

Campaign headquarters were established in a twelve-story building on the corner of Fourth Street and Sixth Avenue owned by the Piccirilli family. Placards bearing LaGuardia's photograph and praising his virtues in bold letters were displayed in windows and other vantage points in the district. To make the campaign more effective, the managers decided to hold a gala parade through the principal streets of the neighborhood. On the night of the scheduled rally, few of LaGuardia's supporters appeared. But in spite of the many defections and a heavy downpour of rain, it was decided to proceed with the parade. Piccirilli led the march along Fourth Street carrying a large banner fixed at the end of a long pole urging the residents of the community to vote for his candidate. LaGuardia followed behind him. A group of only twenty thoroughly drenched men and boys made up the body of the ill-fated parade.

LaGuardia's rival was well known to the voters of the district, and great was their resentment of one whom they considered an interloper. Scarcely had the parade advanced several hundred yards when the marchers were greeted with catcalls and showered with a barrage of vegetables which poured upon them from doorways, open windows and roof tops. The parade dispersed immediately amid much confusion and the disillusioned participants returned to their homes. LaGuardia, neither deterred nor disheartened, continued to challenge the opponent, whose regard for his candidacy was one of complacent indifference. Young LaGuardia waged a vigorous campaign and many of his speaking tours ended in fistfights and free-for-all brawls in which he was an unflinching participant. LaGuardia was defeated, to be sure, but he amassed such an unprecedented vote in that district for a Republican candidate, that the Republican organ-

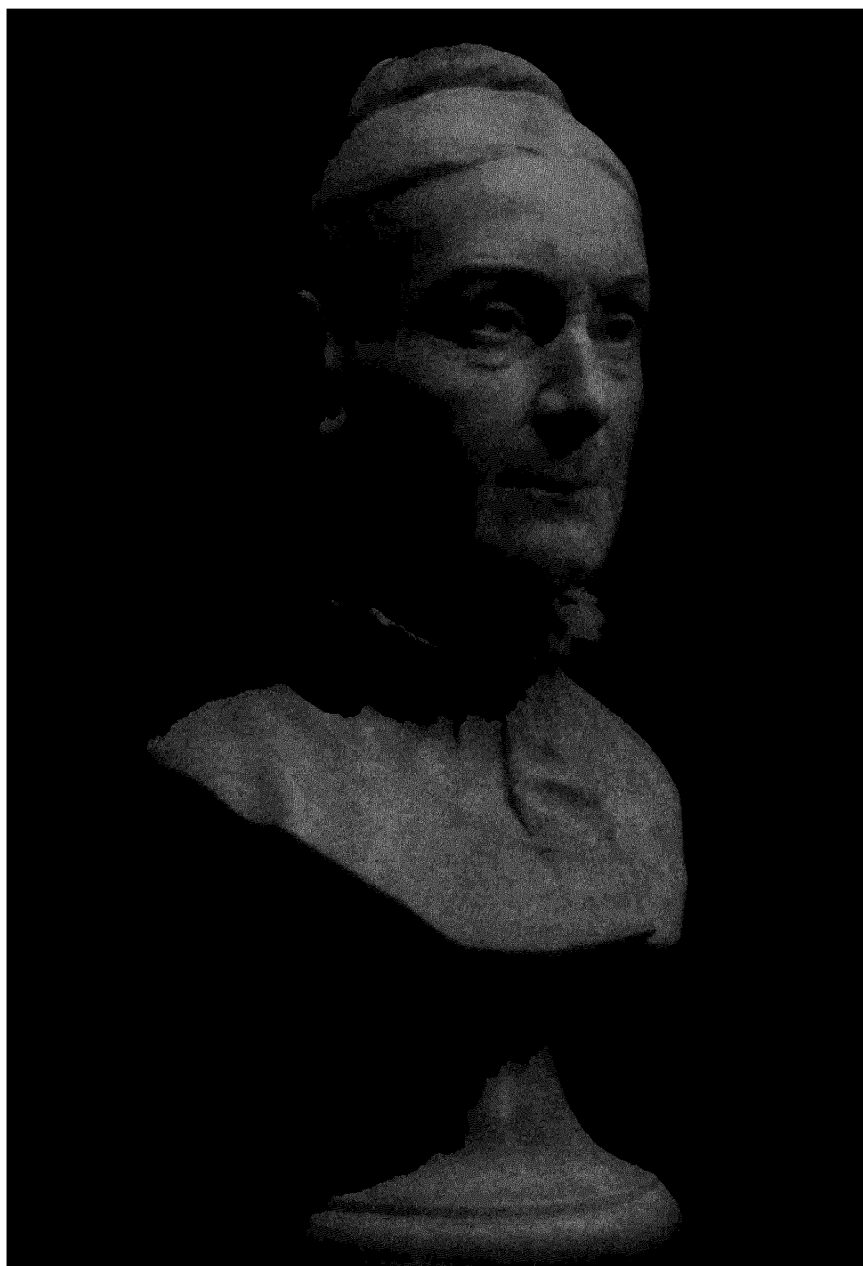


PLATE 13

Collection of the Sculpto

MOTHER

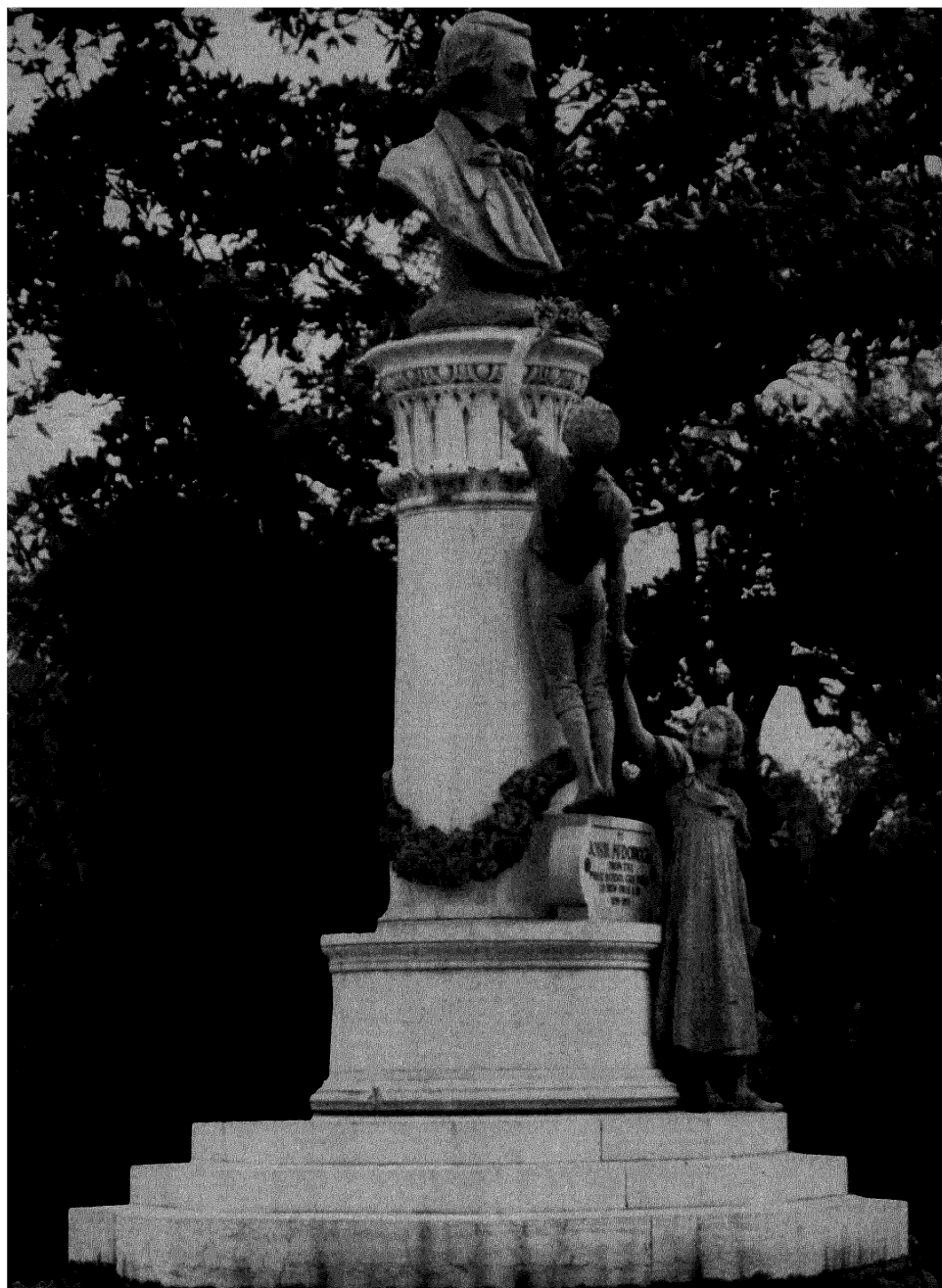


PLATE 14

Lafayette Square, New Orleans, L

JOHN McDONOGH MEMORIAL MONUMENT

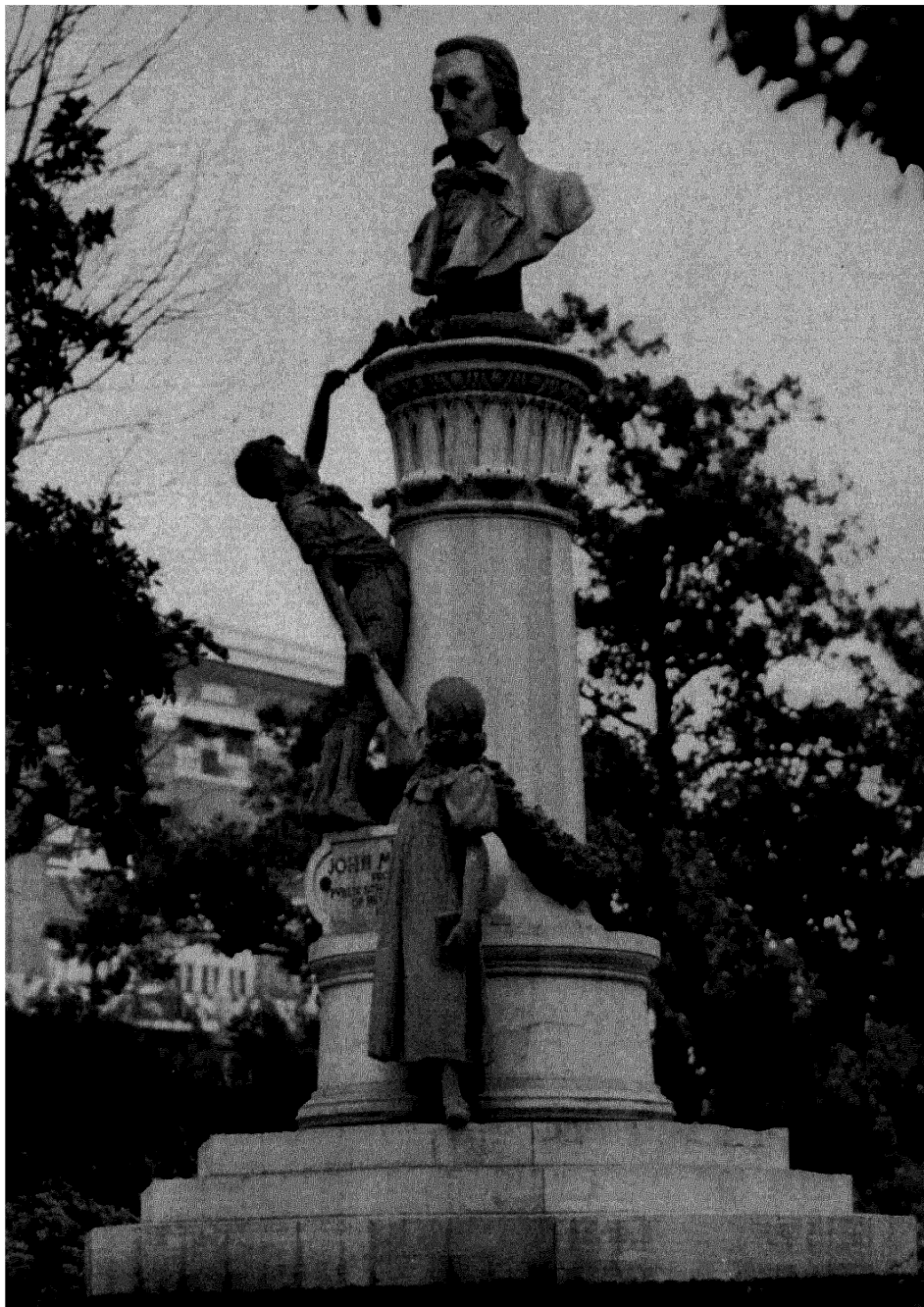


PLATE 15

Lafayette Square, New Orleans,

JOHN McDONOGH MEMORIAL MONUMENT

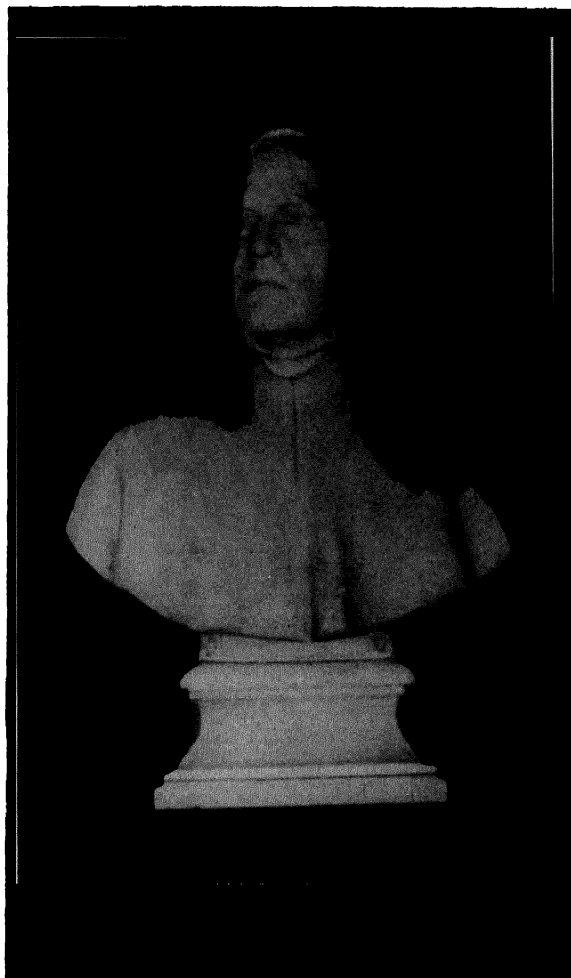


PLATE 16

S Agnes' Church, N Y

THE RIGHT REVEREND HENRY A. BRANN

be incomplete without the sculptor; and the LaGuardia children, who call him "Uncle," look forward to his Sunday visits. These pleasant family dinners have always been cherished by Piccirilli as a welcome respite after a week of hard work and lonely evenings. These weekly reunions began when the artist decided to live alone in his immense studio after his separation from his wife in 1924. When LaGuardia becomes weary of his many public and administrative responsibilities and seeks relaxation, he often finds it at Attilio's studio. In an atmosphere, quiet and informal, they prepare their own meals, indulging heartily their appetites and their views. LaGuardia's knowledge of music is well known to all. His keen appreciation of art is attributable, in some measure, to his residence abroad when he was in diplomatic service, to Onorio Ruotolo, another sculptor and close friend, but primarily to his long association with Piccirilli.

These two men, so different in character, have been intimate friends for more than thirty years. Notwithstanding their strongly contrasted personalities, this close relationship has grown more mellow with time. Their regard for each other, more than a mutual respect, approaches the affection unusually shared by brothers. Piccirilli is retiring, soft-spoken and unassuming with a love for the quiet, contemplative life he lives. LaGuardia is a dynamic, forceful personality with a natural flair for oratory and a yen for the spectacular. Piccirilli is timid and self-contained and has a natural dislike for controversies. LaGuardia is highly-strung, quick of wit, assertive, self-assured and uncompromising when fighting for a cause. It would seem paradoxical that two men, diametrically opposite in personality, should remain friends for so many years. A politician and an artist would seem to make

a strange combination, but the fact that this friendship has grown more firm with time is a tribute to the character of both men.

Years passed full of trying events for the sculptor, and with their passing he grew more disconsolate. There were no children who might have been a source of happiness, so it was natural that he drifted in thought and habit away from his home and its distasteful associations. He spent some of his happiest hours with LaGuardia and Angelo Patri, well-known educator and child psychologist. In them he found two genuine friends who helped him immeasurably, keeping him from sinking into complete melancholia.

Enrico Caruso, the celebrated tenor, often visited Attilio at his studio. They were wont to spend the evenings together laughing and singing. They spent many happy hours in the solitude of the large studio or at the kitchen table eating the sculptor's deliciously prepared spaghetti. Caruso would sing his favorite song *Mamma Mia*, while Attilio stood enthralled over the kitchen stove stirring spaghetti in a pot of boiling water. And as often as the famous tenor sang this song, the artist noticed Caruso could not prevent tears from welling in his eyes. These meetings brought treasured happiness to Attilio.

America's entrance into the first World War found Attilio energetically engaged in many patriotic pursuits. When the Italian Government sent one of its important emissaries, Marquis Carlo Cattapani, to America, Piccirilli was a member of the committee appointed by the President of the United States to welcome the distinguished visitor. Marquis Cattapani, a Major in the Italian Army, was a tall, handsome, and well-groomed member of the Italian nobility. He was a magnificent orator. He appeared at many social functions given in his honor bedecked with medals

and foreign decorations and, in comparatively short time, became one of the most talked of and sumptuously feted men in New York and Washington society. This man, who had been sent here to arouse the interest of American citizens of Italian birth in the Allied cause and to help stimulate the purchase of American Liberty Bonds, captured the sculptor's imagination, just as he did that of many young society women. His charm so magnetized Attilio that he followed him about like a satellite. Attilio neglected his home and work many months while he accompanied the Marquis throughout the Atlantic Seaboard where the latter made many public appearances. The Marquis reciprocated Attilio's admiration but it was not long before he began to abuse his kindness and good offices. Piccirilli spent generously on the Marquis' entertainment, and even persuaded him to leave the Waldorf Astoria for a specially prepared apartment provided by the Piccirilli family. The apartment occupied all of the third floor of Piccirilli's studio, and the Marquis enjoyed this hospitality for almost two years as the sculptor's guest.

With the signing of the Armistice in November, 1918, the Marquis' mission in America came to an end. But he did not return to Italy, however, preferring to remain in the comfortable quarters which the Piccirillis had furnished. His selfishness irked Piccirilli's other brothers who had come to resent him. The Marquis had been entertaining young men in his apartment and his inordinate conduct aroused their suspicions. Attilio refused to believe his brothers. Finally, rumors became persistent regarding the visitor's bisexual proclivity, and Attilio decided that he should leave the apartment at once. The Marquis, however, employed devious excuses to remain, and his procrastinations made Attilio ever so resolute in his determination to oust his once welcome

guest. He finally made up his mind to take drastic action to achieve his purpose.

Arrangements with a building contractor were made to convert the spacious apartment into a large studio. The Marquis was duly advised of the impending remodeling of the apartment he occupied, but he made no attempt to leave. At eight o'clock one morning, while the Marquis was still asleep, two crews of working men appeared at the apartment, and without bothering to awaken the sleeper, proceeded to tear down the walls with crowbars and pickaxes. When the startled Marquis opened his eyes he saw, through a hole in the wall, the ruddy faces of several working men going about their work of demolition with casual indifference. Attilio and his brothers, convulsed with laughter, watched the amusing proceedings. Not until this unpleasant chore was accomplished was Attilio able to return to his work.

LaGuardia, too, had some serious family trouble, but of an entirely different nature. LaGuardia's wife had given birth to a baby girl in 1921, and, though lovely to all appearances, the child was delicate and frail, as was its mother. Both failed rapidly in health after the birth of the child until LaGuardia's wife died in November, 1921, six months after the death of his daughter, Fioretta. The double tragedy caused LaGuardia inconsolable grief, and Attilio realized that something had to be done to prevent LaGuardia's complete mental and physical collapse, which to him seemed inevitable. Friends suggested a trip to Havana, Cuba, for a change of environment to help him forget his sorrow. LaGuardia asked Attilio to accompany him—they left New York in December, 1921, and returned the first week in January.

In the summer of 1922, Piccirilli found it necessary to go to Italy to consult with the Italian Government in regard to

the **BOY OF THE PIAVE**, a monument which was to have been dedicated to the brave soldiers who had fallen in the *Battle of the Piave* during the first World War. It was tentatively planned to erect the monument on the Pincio Hill in Rome, and it was to be paid for by contributions from American citizens. The monument was originally proposed by a group of distinguished Americans which had consulted Piccirilli. Accompanying Piccirilli on his mission to Rome were the architect chosen for the proposed monument, Henry Bacon, designer of the Lincoln Memorial in the nation's capital, and Andrew Anderson, a well-known Chicagoan architect. The artists arrived in Rome three days before Mussolini seized control of the Italian Government. As a matter of fact, they watched Mussolini's dramatic *March on Rome* in October, 1922, from the balcony of their hotel. The temporary set-back in Piccirilli's plans, occasioned by the promulgation of the new government, was soon overcome. Mussolini, the new leader of the Italian Government, agreed to see them on the third day of his regime, assuring them of his support and expressing a desire that the monument be completed within six months. They were the first three men to be received officially by the new head of the government. So mammoth were the proportions of the contemplated monument that it was estimated the project could not be completed in less than two years. When Mussolini was informed of the impossibility of fulfilling his request within six months, he replied, "No matter when you come to Rome again you will find me here." As Piccirilli left the strutting Duce with his two companions, he remarked to them that if he understood the true temperament and character of the Italian people, Mussolini would not remain in power very long. The monument was never completed.

Piccirilli had not been to Italy since 1910, and the many changes he found intrigued him. There were many interesting places to be seen when the scheduled period of his stay was over, with the result that Piccirilli and his two companions decided to prolong their vacation. He felt some misgivings about extending his sojourn in Italy in view of his wife's skeptical nature. To allay her suspicions and to avert needless bickering, Piccirilli asked Anderson to write Mrs. Piccirilli a note assuring her that all was well and that her husband would return in several weeks. Anderson closed his letter by saying that Attilio was being a "good boy." In due course she received the letter and proceeded to read it to her sisters, while making much of Anderson's charming personality whom she knew quite well. The letter immediately took on added significance. What reason could Anderson have had in writing for Attilio? This innocent letter was interpreted to mean that Anderson was probably interested in one of the sisters. Plans to meet the boat carrying the three men back to New York were made, but the two young ladies were sadly disappointed. Attilio returned alone, Mr. Bacon having gone to Greece to meet his wife and Mr. Anderson to Egypt to continue his vacation. When Anderson finally returned to America he was invited to the sculptor's home for dinner.

The following day a box of red roses was delivered to Piccirilli's sisters-in-law. They had been sent from the Ambassador Hotel where Anderson was staying, and it was assumed that he had ordered them. A card was not enclosed, but this omission was attributed to his modesty. Anna, one of the young ladies, knew the significance of red roses and deduced that Anderson was in love with her. Mr. and Mrs. Bacon had chosen the evening of the flower incident to entertain the Piccirillis. Knowing the host to

be an intimate friend of Anderson, Anna told him the story of the flowers. Mr. Bacon assured her that Anderson was not the person to send flowers without enclosing a card. Anna remained skeptical, but to convince herself beyond doubt, wrote Anderson a letter thanking him for the lovely flowers. Anderson replied apologetically, stating that he had not sent the roses and reproaching himself for not having thought of it. The infuriated sisters suspected Attilio as the perpetrator of the hoax and promptly reported him to the police with a demand that he be arrested at once. They were politely advised that even if it were possible to prove beyond doubt — which, of course, they could not — that Attilio, or anyone else, had sent the flowers, such an act was not considered a crime and, consequently, not punishable. Not all the trying incidents in Piccirilli's married life contained the fully appreciated humor of this situation.

Calm, affable, and not easily ruffled, Attilio is known among his friends for his kindness and easy-going manner — this humility was indirectly responsible for so much unhappiness in his married life. Mrs. Piccirilli knew her husband's attitude towards domestic squabbles too well. They were beneath his dignity and hence he maintained an attitude of unconcerned aloofness. This aloofness very often enraged his wife and under such circumstances he would leave his apartment, impervious to her emotional outbursts. One day while his wife was up-braiding him, his usual indifference so incensed her that she began ridiculing him for his unswerving loyalty to America, an attitude calculated to irritate Attilio. As a climax to her vituperations, she seized his citizenship papers and tore them into many small pieces scattering them about. Attilio's friends know with what reverence and tremendous pride he regards those papers, which had conferred so



LATE 17

Maine Memorial Monument, Central Park, N. Y.

CENTRAL GROUP



LATE 18

Marie Memorial Monument, Central Park, N. Y.

COLUMBIA TRIUMPHANT

There he was waiting with nervous impatience with his trunk by his side, when he was startled by repeated cries of "Thief! Robber!" Neighbors on the same floor opened their doors, dressed in nightclothes, curious to know the cause of the disturbance. Someone had telephoned the police.

Attilio speaks of that night with much feeling. "You cannot imagine my embarrassment. For a moment I was too confused to know what was actually happening. When I suddenly realized that I was supposed to be the thief, I picked up my trunk and returned meekly to the apartment to quiet them. I was never so humiliated in my life. The following morning I left, never to return." This occurred in 1924, after eighteen years of unhappiness.

During these eighteen long years of married life, from 1906 to 1924, Attilio suffered immeasurably. Yet, during this same period he was able to achieve success and distinction in his work. Most of his important commissions were won, completed and acclaimed during his married life. It was a period of great productivity. The story of Attilio's unhappiness is told in the magnificent figure of the OUTCAST (Plates 47, 48). It was also during this time that such beautiful statues — TWILIGHT (Plate 49), FLOWER OF THE ALPS (Plate 50), SPRING DREAM (Plate 58), SPIRIT OF YOUTH (Plate 59) — were created.

Attilio's unhappiness, instead of asserting itself in the ugly, brought out the beautiful. This phenomenon does not defy explanation. Almost immediately after his marriage, he was compelled to accede to domination by his wife. He tolerated this repugnant situation because of his implicit belief that eventually his marital differences would be solved happily. However, she continued to encroach upon his personal liberties and to impose an

unyielding will upon him until he no longer considered himself a free man. And, rather than resort to a life of petty wrangling which he loathed intensely, he allowed himself to drift into so pathetic a situation. Gradually, as months went by, psychological adjustments were made, nurtured by a desire for spiritual and mental freedom. A change in the sculptor's entire personality became evident. A dual personality came slowly into being. It was induced by and part of a defense mechanism to help him dispel and compensate for his sadness.

Attilio ceased to live the moment he entered his home after a hard day's work at the studio. His individuality as an artist and his identity as a person were completely lost in the antagonistic environment of his home. Virtually a prisoner, he was loath to express an opinion lest it be construed with meanings never remotely intended. He looked upon himself as an outcast, a stranger in his own home. Dominated and ridiculed, he was deprived of the privileges which are every man's right. His social position and important contacts were exploited to promote the interests of others. His thoughts, feelings and emotions were stifled once he set foot in this unfriendly setting. Here there was no desire nor encouragement for creative expression. The world became sterile, barren and futile. Art and beauty no longer existed, only the ugly remained.

However, when Attilio emerged from his home in the morning to greet the bright, warm sunshine and fresh air, life was restored to him again. His melancholy vanished, his depressed soul and perplexed mind were free again to welcome a new happiness and serenity. Nature appeared ever so beautiful! Everyone and everything seemed so friendly. The thought that morning always

brought with it these happy experiences had made his existence at home bearable.

Once he entered his studio, his family passed into oblivion. The familiar environment and cheerful faces of his sculptor brothers brought him renewed fervor and zeal for his work. His work now was the all-important. He was unshackled, free to express his soul and thoughts without fear of repression. Beauty is what he now sought, and in the amicable atmosphere of his surroundings, he became once more exuberantly happy, the creator without restraints.

The sadness of his married life may explain the magnitude of the satisfaction he found in his work. Attilio's dual personality, bred as it was by distressing circumstances, probably accounts for the beauty he was capable of creating during years of unpleasantness and marital difficulties.

CHAPTER IV

Restoration of Buildings of the University of Virginia in Collaboration with Sanford White — Subsequent Bankruptcy of the Piccirilli Studio — The Maine Memorial Monument — The Allen S. Apgar Memorial — Mother-and-Child — Fortitude — Courage — Study of a Head — Justice — Warrior — History — Head of a Woman (Alabaster) — Ideal Head, The John Herron Art Institute — Pacific — Atlantic — Columbia Triumphant — The Firemen's Memorial Monument — Votive Tablet — Duty — Courage — Head of a Woman (Bronze), Metropolitan Museum of Art — Indian Lawgiver — Indian Literature — A Soul — Fragelina — Portrait of Maria — Portrait of Furio — Advantages of Clay Modeling in Portraiture — Direct Stone Carving — Statuette of Paris — Psychological Approach to Problems of Design

In the early part of 1895, fire destroyed several buildings of the University of Virginia. Sanford White (1853-1906), nationally known architect, and the Piccirilli brothers were commissioned to restore the buildings to their original splendor. These buildings were originally designed by Thomas Jefferson and extreme care was taken to entrust the work of restoration to competent men.

Piccirilli's studio purchased all the marble required for the reconstruction, and he and his brothers were retained to carve the architectural decorations for the buildings under the supervision

of Sanford White. When the work of reconstruction was well-nigh completed, the building corporation which held the contract for the work declared itself insolvent.

News of the contractor's insolvency was a terrible blow to the Piccirilli brothers who had invested their entire savings for the purchase of the necessary marble. Every penny the family had saved was lost. This financial reversal reduced the Piccirilli family to the same status as when it had arrived in New York in 1888.

Undismayed, however, by this unexpected misfortune, the Piccirilli brothers, soon after, began work again in their anxiety to pay off their obligations and creditors. Fortunately, at the time of bankruptcy, Attilio was awarded the commission for the MAINE MEMORIAL MONUMENT, and with it a substantial first payment. Otherwise, the family would have been in complete financial ruin.

The commission to execute the MAINE MEMORIAL had great historical significance. At the end of the Nineteenth Century, public sentiment in the United States was aroused against the Spanish Government for its maltreatment of the Cuban people. Spanish officials governing the Island were accused by the natives and the American press of dealing treacherously with Cuban insurrectionists, who rebelled against the tyranny of Spanish rule and who fought for the liberation and independence of Cuba. In its anxiety to avoid embroilment in the internal affairs of the Island in its controversy with Spain, the United States Government had ordered all American merchant ships to withdraw from Cuban waters. As a gesture of good will, and partly to protect American sugar interests in Cuba, President William McKinley ordered the battleship Maine to visit Cuba. A sudden crisis occurred on the night of February 15, 1898, when the American battleship Maine was

mysteriously sunk by an explosion in Havana Harbor with a loss of two hundred and sixty members of its crew.

In a subsequent message to Congress, President McKinley reviewed the catastrophe as follows:

“For some time prior to the visit of the Maine to Havana, our consular representative pointed out the advantages to flow from the visit of national ships to the Cuban waters, in accustoming the people to the presence of our flag as a symbol of good will and of our ships in the fulfilment of the mission of protection to American interests, even though no immediate need might exist. Accordingly, after conference with the Spanish minister, the peninsular authorities at Madrid and Havana were advised of the purpose of this Government to resume friendly naval visits at Cuban ports and that in that view the Maine would call at the port of Havana. The announcement was received by the Spanish Government with appreciation of the friendly character of the visit of the Maine and with notification that they would return the courtesy by sending Spanish ships to the principal ports of the United States.”

Public sentiment was deeply stirred by the tragedy, particularly in view of the President's message to Congress. Spain was accused of sinking the Maine, although the American people failed to realize at the time that the Spanish Government and the Spanish overseers in Cuba, who often acted without authority and official instruction, were not the same body. This fact, however, did not prevent the wave of indignation which swept over the nation. “Remember the Maine” was a cry heard in every section of the country. The incident unquestionably precipitated the Spanish-American War.

With the conclusion of the war, a group of distinguished

citizens assembled in 1901 to raise funds through public subscription for a monument to commemorate the memory of "the valiant seamen who perished in the *Maine* by fate unwarned, in death unafraid." A national committee was organized with James Grant Wilson as its chairman. An intensive campaign for public contributions was successfully undertaken by William Randolph Hearst, vice-chairman of the committee.

With thousands of dollars donated by a responsive public in a comparatively short time, the committee announced a national competition for a design of the proposed MAINE MEMORIAL. The national prominence of the memorial made the acquisition of its commission the most coveted prize of every sculptor in America. Forty nationally known sculptors submitted sketches in competition. Many months of protracted deliberations and academic discussions followed before the commission was finally awarded to Piccirilli for presenting a design of striking originality. Artists throughout the country praised the committee's choice—letters commending its action literally deluged the committee. The general approval, particularly among sculptors, which welcomed the announcement of Piccirilli's name as winner of the national competition, was a unique tribute to the acknowledged genius of the sculptor who, until this time, had worked in comparative obscurity.

The MAINE MEMORIAL MONUMENT (Plate 17) forms an imposing entrance to Central Park in New York. Around the four sides of a massive pylon of Tennessee marble, forty-four feet high and approximately twelve feet square at the base, are ten heroic figures artistically arranged. Rising majestically from the summit of the central pylon is a colossal bronze group representing a female standing in a sea-shell drawn by three magnificently ren-

dered sea-horses, symbolizing COLUMBIA TRIUMPHANT (Plate 18).

Five stately, over life-size figures, standing on the prow of a battleship placed in a low fountain-basin of circular design and approached by three broad steps forming the stylobate, represent the principal group of the monument and face Columbus Circle (Plate 17). A robed female figure representing PEACE stands protectingly with outstretched arms in the center of the group. Four figures are arranged around the dignified figure of PEACE which occupies the dominant position, standing as it does above the seated figures at her feet.

While Piccirilli was at work on the figure of PEACE, he was visited by a wealthy widow, Mrs. Mary J. Apgar, who had recently returned from Rome and had been referred to him by a Roman sculptor. She had gone to Rome to have a memorial designed for her husband's grave. A huge sarcophagus in dark blue marble, upon which a prostrate figure of a woman in white marble was crying convulsively, already had been placed over the grave. The eery contrast of the white marble against the dark blue background of the sarcophagus produced a disturbing psychological effect which displeased her very much. She sought Piccirilli's advice on what to do.

When Mrs. Apgar entered the large building housing the various studios maintained by the six Piccirilli brothers, she was directed to Attilio's private studio and was compelled to pass through several large exhibition halls whose walls were covered with several hundred pieces of sculpture carved over a period of many years by the six brothers. She finally entered Attilio's studio, enthralled at what she had seen, and found him at work on the beautiful figure of PEACE. He greeted her with his customary cor-

diality and proceeded to escort her from studio to studio, explaining as he went along the history and background of his better-known work.

Mrs. Apgar became so enamored of the stately beauty of the sculptor's statue, and she was so agreeably and delightfully impressed by the gentility and spiritual nobility of peace expressed, that she decided to remain until the sculptor agreed to sell her the statue. Piccirilli explained that the figure was intended for the MAINE MEMORIAL, and to dissuade her further, priced the figure at ten thousand dollars. She expressed her willingness to pay the money if he designed a new memorial for her husband's grave with the figure of PEACE as the dominant motif. Her sincerity and persistent desire to acquire the figure proved convincing enough. He agreed to make a few minor changes before the figure was cast in bronze and made part of a more fitting grave monument. It is now called the APGAR MEMORIAL (Plate 19), and has since superseded the sarcophagus made in Rome which was completely dismantled. It stands on a high hill in Kensico Cemetery, Valhalla, N. Y.

Perhaps the most interesting single sculpture of the principal group of the MAINE MEMORIAL MONUMENT is the one of the mother-and-child representing FORTITUDE. The original study for this group (Plate 20) was cut in marble and portrayed a naked mother embracing a weeping child whom she holds close to her bosom. It was awarded the Silver Medal at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis, Missouri, in 1904, and the Gold Medal in 1915 at the San Francisco Exposition. William Randolph Hearst was so impressed by its simplicity and universality that he purchased it for his celebrated collection at San Simeon, California.

In the final production of the same theme, the group now

comprising part of the MAINE MONUMENT, Piccirilli decided to drape the lower part of the mother's body, fearing that her nakedness might offend public taste. By draping the lower part of the body with a loose-fitting garment, revealing the form with convincing adequacy, he managed to preserve a more respectful attitude of maternal decorum. (Plate 21).

There is no appreciable difference, other than the one noted, in the sculptural composition between the mother-and-child of the MAINE MONUMENT and the group in the collection of William Randolph Hearst. FORTITUDE is clearly demonstrated in the undaunted and valiant attitude of the courageous mother. As a commemorative symbol, the significance of the group is apparent. A grief-stricken mother is mourning the tragedy of a husband lost at sea. With dignity and restraint, she endeavors to conceal her sorrow, while she holds her young son with deep sensibility in spite of her confused emotions. Consoled by the child's proximity and warmth, she realizes that the little boy has now become a living symbol of a departed one. Unable to grasp the significance or meaning of his mother's bereavement, the boy instinctively seeks the shelter of his mother's embrace as if to comfort her and allay her sorrow.

FORTITUDE is also intended to represent a theme which is perhaps as old in the tradition of art as it is universal. In his conception of the theme, the sculptor presents more than a mere representation of mother-and-child — he gives us an expression of his own soul; an expression of the endearment and love he bore his own mother to whom he was utterly devoted during her lifetime. The group is a solidification of the artist's emotional nature in which he successfully transcribes his intangible feelings into a rational, plastic objectivity. One need only to behold the group to

enjoy the experience which the artist transmitted to it. Piccirilli has preserved for us something of that instinctive and inherent oneness which exists universally between every mother and child. Here is an excellent example of how the prevailing mood of a statue determined its sculptural composition. Love and affection, suggested by the intimate and inseparable relationship between mother and child, is reflected in the compact design of the group. The plastic whole represents the spiritual entity and oneness which is found in every similar relationship.

Both figures are remarkably modeled, and their arrangement is natural and pleasant. A thorough understanding of human anatomy is indicated by the physical structure of the young boy. Piccirilli's knowledge comes from years of careful observation for he always displayed an analytic interest in the behavior of children. Merging planes and surfaces form softly modeled and accurately-rendered muscles. Both figures are conceived with the greatest simplicity and the absence of detail is noteworthy. As a whole, the composition shows the same simplicity, compactness of design, and monumentality of an Egyptian pyramid — the two figures are woven into a pyramidal pattern of great beauty.

Mood and sentiment are expressed with a pleasing restraint reminiscent of Greek sculpture. Her head graciously inclined to one side, the mother's expression is one of tenderness and sweetness despite the apparent pathos. The child seems to enjoy the assurance and protection of his mother while he is encompassed in her arms.

Perhaps the success achieved in the execution of this theme is due to the sculptor's spirited feeling with which he appears to have inspired the group. This monument is a plastic representation of maternal and filial affection which cohere harmoniously. The

tranquility and serenity of the statue is monumental and awe-inspiring, and its infiltration with the artist's own spiritual being has given the theme a living, human quality. Upon the death of the artist's mother in 1910, this group was cast in bronze and placed above her grave in Woodlawn Cemetery, New York, as a monument and symbol of Piccirilli's enduring affection.

To the right of the standing figure of PEACE is a figure of a man symbolizing COURAGE. He is seated with his legs crossed, impatiently awaiting the call of his country to defend its honor and maintain its peace. He is fearless and intrepid. This figure shows the sculptor's use of *contrapposto* which by its contortion produces a swelling of the body's musculature to create the idea of restlessness and great strength. A study for this figure is shown in STUDY OF A HEAD (Plate 22).

A young boy, representing VICTORY, kneels with one knee on the very edge of the prow, holding an olive wreath aloft in each outstretched hand. The figure is intended to symbolize the new Cuban era of peace at the end of Spanish domination; a peace made possible by the dead who had given their lives to inaugurate a new epoch for a stricken people.

A figure of JUSTICE, heavily robed and with up-lifted arms, dominates the posterior group of three figures facing Central Park (Plate 23). The group is unified by the wall of the pylon which forms its background, and is *post-bellum* in concept. JUSTICE, with closed eyes indicative of the impartial administration of justice, having entrusted her sword to the WARRIOR to execute her mandates, receives it again at his hands after the liberation of the oppressed. A seated figure of a partly-draped woman, representing HISTORY (Plate 24), records the deeds of valor and victory.

HISTORY surpasses the other two figures of the group in

point of sculptural composition. She is gracefully disposed — her left hand supports a tablet upon which she gazes intently while contemplating the inscription of the heroic deeds of a memorable victory. She is partly covered by a heavy robe, with the upper part of her body exposed, and is balanced on the opposite side by the figure of the WARRIOR. He is in a half rising or kneeling position, offering his bronze sword, which he holds high in his right hand, to the standing figure of JUSTICE.

The sculptor made two studies before deciding upon the type he wanted for the figure of HISTORY. One of the studies, HEAD OF A WOMAN (Plate 25), was carved in alabaster and is in the collection of the sculptor. The other, IDEAL HEAD (Plate 26), was executed in marble and is in the possession of The John Heron Art Institute, Indianapolis, Indiana.

When seen from the front, this group representing Justice, forms a triangular composition. Two figures placed at the base angles of this triangle, and slightly in front of the figure of JUSTICE, insure greater harmony of design. As in the anterior group, lines, spaces, masses and perspective are fully exploited to produce a good cumulative composition.

The monumental pylon of the MAINE MONUMENT is flanked on the east and west sides by smaller pylons decorated with maritime symbols in low relief. Decorative bands of sculpture, representing a dolphin-and-wave motif, encircle the entire base of the monument. Colossal, reclining nudes of ocean deities, symbolic of the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean are intended to suggest the national scope of the memorial, rest on these lateral pylons or podia.

An elderly man with a long, flowing beard typifies the

PACIFIC (Plate 27). His head is covered with water leaves and his hair is imaginatively conceived in the form of small fishes. Half slumbering, his right arm held lazily over his head, he rests with his full weight on a large rock, at the base of which are many species of shell fish realistically rendered and clustered together in a single heap. The crustacean detail adds interest to the marine subject. In its essence and momentous strength, the figure of PACIFIC is akin to Michelangelo's gigantic and venerable figure of *Moses*, and shows the same breadth and massive treatment of form. The loose, flabby flesh is descriptive of old age. One is immediately aware of an atmosphere of serene peacefulness enveloping the aged man, giving him clearer definition and meaning as a personification of the Pacific Ocean. This figure is not unrelated in spirit to Michelangelo's reclining figure of *Evening*, part of the tomb of Lorenzo de' Medici, in the Medici Chapel of San Lorenzo, Florence. In design, however, it bears a closer resemblance to *Mount Olympus* or *Theseus* from the East Pediment of the Parthenon.

A reclining youth in the fulness of his power and strength, typifies ATLANTIC (Plate 28). In grace and nobility, this figure is also analogous to the splendid recumbent statue of *Theseus*. His enigmatic pensiveness and dignified demeanor are in keeping with his calm, languid manner. He seems unmindful and unafraid of the octopus whose long tentacles circumvent his body, demonstrating the dominance and supremacy of the sea over the creatures which live in its waters. Almost three times over life-size, the two recumbent deities are described with a grandiose simplicity contributing infinitely to their monumental beauty.

A huge group in bronze (Plate 18), cast from guns recovered from the battleship Maine, crowns the pylon of the mon-

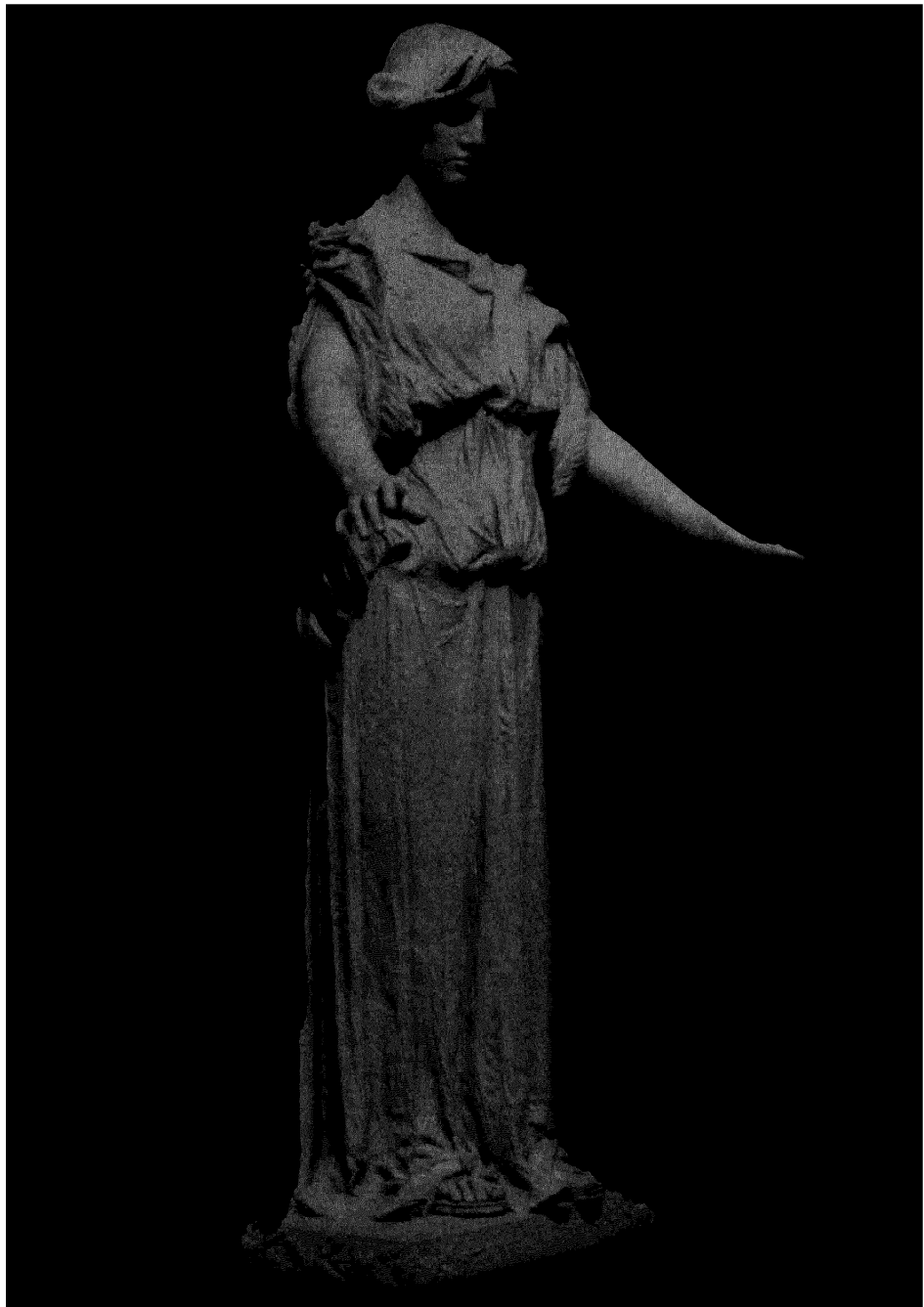


PLATE 19

Kensico Cemetery, Valhalla, N

ALLEN S. APGAR MEMORIAL

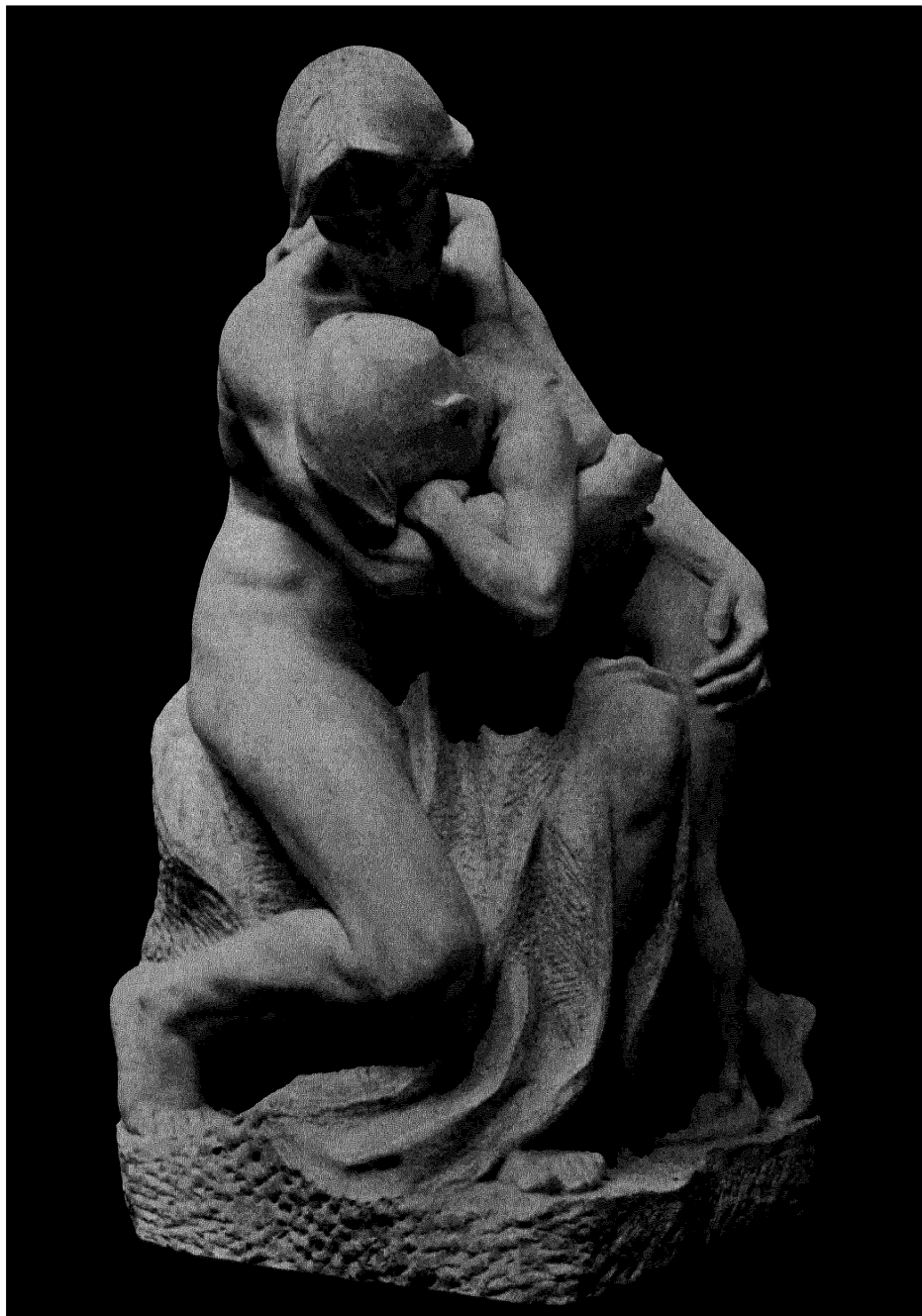


PLATE 20

Collection, William Randolph Hearst, San Simeon, Calif.

MOTHER-AND-CHILD

figure representing PEACE which appear to keep the pyramidal composition intact by seemingly holding the lateral figures together. The wall surface of the pylon itself is another important element in achieving harmony—a common background always serves to unify a design.

Few artists have demonstrated a better knowledge and understanding of spatial composition. Piccirilli did not lose sight of the fact that these figures were to stand apart in space, and that space itself had to be utilized to keep the figures in the same visual composition. Therefore “empty spaces” were designed in a pre-arranged and not haphazard pattern. Sculpture is an art of volume as well as space, and both bear certain indivisible and reciprocal relationship to each other. Especially is this true, as in the present instance, where two or more figures on different levels form part of a sculptural composition.

Nothing in this monument appears adventitious. Details are reduced to bare essentials in order to preserve the grand scale of the figures. The sculptor realized that the figures embellishing the four sides of the pylon would not be raised very high above the base of the stylobate. Therefore, he kept his outlines and contours simple and added interesting details of marine life at a level where they could be seen and appreciated. Similarly, the monotony of the flat wall surfaces is relieved by exquisite bands of continuous bas-reliefs which circumscribe and adorn the base of the pylon and are carried around the simulated wooden battleship.

A painter-critic at the time of the unveiling felt that in comparison to the two colossal figures of PACIFIC and ATLANTIC, the figures of the anterior and posterior groups appear dwarfed. It is not difficult to understand why the sculptor changed the scale of the various figures in this monument. The change in scale is

admissible on the purely physical fact that it is impossible to see the gigantic figures of the ocean deities with either the anterior or posterior group. Therefore, such a comparison would be impossible. Further justification may be found in the fact that the sculptor realized the virtual impossibility of seeing the memorial in its entirety due to the monumental column standing in the center of Columbus Circle, which obstructs its view. Apparently the painter-critic was not too familiar with the distinctly peculiar problems of the sculptor. The expediency of using figures of larger scale, which were designed to occupy singly one wall surface on the lateral walls, seems incontrovertible.

Piccirilli's consideration and solution of optical refinements in this monument, a factor too often ignored by sculptors generally, is praiseworthy. For example, the figures of the posterior and anterior groups are nine feet tall, but those on the summit of the pylon are designed on a larger scale, and for good reasons. The Greeks learned, as early as the Fifth Century, B.C., that the columns in their architecture varied in diameter depending upon their position in the temple in order to correct certain optical illusions. Although the columns of a peristyle were originally based upon a common diameter, the Greeks soon realized that the three angle columns, which were seen contrasted against the open sky, appeared thinner and therefore weaker than the more central columns which had the cella or naos wall of the temple as a background. To avoid this semblance of instability and apparent weakness, the three angle columns were made stouter and placed slightly closer together. To effect a somewhat similar psychological correction or optical adjustment, Piccirilli designed the bronze group which crowns the pylon on a different scale. These figures were made larger because they are seen against the open sky. A

circular shield was also placed behind the figure of COLUMBIA to prevent it from appearing too thin.

In point of style, the design is conventional, and the architectural and sculptural elements are treated classically. The whole monument was executed in Tennessee marble and the architectural details were prepared in collaboration with H. van Buren Magonigle. Evidence of its high artistic merit may be gathered from the fact that of the forty sketches entered in competition—several participants enjoying international fame—three were chosen for final consideration, and Piccirilli was declared winner of the commission with the ultimate elimination of the remaining two competitors. A group of distinguished artists assisted the committee for the MAINE MEMORIAL MONUMENT in reaching its final decision.

Piccirilli was awarded the commission in 1901, and the contract stipulated that the monument was to be completed in four years, but it was not dedicated until 1913. The delay was occasioned by the prevailing political strife in New York City between William Randolph Hearst, an ardent promoter of the project, and Tammany Hall, the corrupt political machine controlling the city government. Refusal of the city government to approve the site intended for the monument delayed its dedication. These dilatory tactics were designed to deprive William Randolph Hearst, an inveterate and militant opponent of Tammany politics, of the honor and satisfaction of seeing the memorial dedicated. Piccirilli was told by the Municipal Art Commission, which had approved his design enthusiastically, that so long as Hearst continued his newspaper attacks against Tammany Hall, the monument would remain in his studio indefinitely. Not until William J. Gaynor was elected Mayor of the City of New York

on an anti-Tammany platform, with the vital support of Hearst, was the question of the MAINE MEMORIAL finally liquidated. Mayor Gaynor's first official act was the approval of the site in Central Park for the MAINE MEMORIAL MONUMENT.

Before a solemn gathering of distinguished citizens, the MAINE MEMORIAL MONUMENT was dedicated on Decoration Day, May 30, 1913, in the presence of former President William H. Taft, who delivered the principal address; Governor William Sulzer of New York, Governor Haines of Maine, Mayor Gaynor, and many illustrious personages in public and private life. Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, representing President Woodrow Wilson, visited New York for the occasion. The United States fleet was ordered to New York Bay to pay its tribute to the occasion. With the unveiling of the monument, Piccirilli rose to an undisputed position of national prominence.

Several months subsequent to the inauguration of the MAINE MEMORIAL MONUMENT, still another monument was being dedicated "to the men of the Fire Department of the City of New York who died at the call of duty, soldiers in a war that never ends." Before an estimated crowd of ten thousand people which gathered to pay homage to the gallantry of the men who had died in the performance of their duty, the monument was unveiled by a group of girls—children of the heroes who had given their lives in the service of humanity. This imposing memorial (Plate 29), created in 1912 and dedicated in September, 1913, illustrates the scope and breadth of the sculptor's ingenuity and his expert handling of the subject.

The monument consists of a sarcophagus, twenty-six feet at the base and twenty-two feet high, flanked on the north and south sides by sculptural groups. It stands on a high plaza over-

looking the Hudson River at One Hundredth Street, and is approached from Riverside Drive by a grand and spacious flight of steps. Its high location adds indefinitely to the monumentality of the huge sarcophagus, and indeed, one might well concede the opinion that it is one of the finest sites for a civic monument that may be found in the City of New York.

On the west side of the monument, facing Riverside Drive, is a large semi-circular water basin fed from a grotesque mask decoratively carved in low relief. Immediately above the decorative mask from which water spouts, is a large votive bas-relief (Plate 30) beautifully rendered and panelled in the west wall. It depicts the horse-drawn fire-wagon of an earlier day—three horses are galloping fiercely to a fire while a group of people watches their progress with curious interest. Numerous studies were made of the galloping horses which accounts for their realistic action and vigor. These sketches were made in a large fire-house, placed at the sculptor's disposal by the Fire Commissioner, where for several weeks he studied the action of the charging horses as they were raced back and forth countless times before him. Two laborers stripped to the waist, who appear to have been repairing the street pavement, have abandoned their implements of work and are seen dashing from the path of the approaching horses. One man is partly bent over in an attempt to clear the street of a large stone. A descriptive note is added to the skilfully carved relief by the inclusion of a group of bystanders which has hurriedly gathered, impelled by the terrifying sound of the fire gongs, to witness the spectacle of the fire-wagon in action.

Though working in the difficult medium of the low relief, the sculptor succeeds in creating a maximum of action and excite-

ment despite the natural limitations of the medium itself. This panel forms a highly decorative element in the sarcophagus and is satisfying in all its parts. Through the illusion of spatial perspective, so convincingly represented, the bas-relief assumes a magic appearance of reality. The story is told exceedingly well and with remarkable descriptive power. An inscription below the panel reads: "To the heroic dead of the Fire Department."

On the south side of the sarcophagus is a sculptural group representing a mother with her infant son (Plate 31). The group is raised on a high curvilinear podium with a handsomely carved base in low relief depicting in an unbroken band a graceful wave motif interrupted at regular intervals by patterns of fire flames cutting across the waves. Below this interesting motif is a decorative border of leaves.

DUTY, the title of this group, is symbolized by a mother, seated beside a water hydrant, holding the fire helmet of her dead husband, killed in the line of duty. She holds the helmet with tender care in her right hand, embracing her young son with the other. His raincoat is thrown casually across her lap. Duty seems to have a twofold meaning in this sad tragedy. Her attitude is one of deep thought and concern as the realization of her own duty towards her now fatherless child becomes increasingly apparent. There is tenderness and sorrow in the bowed head, but not utter resignation, for in spite of her grief, she senses her new obligation towards the child, a trust which has taken on greater importance now that her husband is dead. Duty is implied, then, not only in the death of her husband, but also in her new responsibility. Too young to understand his mother's sorrow, the child looks at her with an innocent and imploring attitude.

As a composition, the seated mother and standing son are

singularly grouped in an arrangement of unusual effectiveness. Nowhere in the history of sculpture can a more handsome and graceful representation of a young boy be found. Ordinarily, such bodily grace is not associated with adolescents who are inherently awkward and show poor articulation in their bodily movements at this age. Nevertheless, the incongruity is not objectionable, as the body's posture is handsomely attractive. He stands with dignity and ease, with the weight of the body borne on one foot. His left hip is thrown out sharply producing a rhythmic S-curve of the body. The boy looks to his mother, whose pensive and silent attitude is emphasized by her clearly cut features and staring, half-opened eyes. He supports himself with his right hand, which rests heavily on the helmet held on his mother's lap. Both figures are modeled in broad, simple planes and are somewhat fleshy. The hair is treated as a single mass with little detail.

On the north side of the monument is another sculptural group called *COURAGE* (Plate 32). Here, too, is the figure of a seated woman holding the dying form of her husband in her arms. He is obviously not yet dead, for the dilated arteries of the arms and the open nostrils show that he is still alive and breathing. Despite the tragedy which will soon befall her, she does not appear too heavily bowed with grief. Instead, her head is raised, inspired by the impelling desire, the courage, and the will to face the future and what it holds for her, proud in the knowledge that her husband will have died a hero, for his was the courage to save the lives of others at the peril of his own. She leans slightly forward, bent by the weight of her husband's prostrated form which she encircles with both arms. Realizing that death cannot be staved off, she gazes intently with unseeing eyes,

lost in her own thoughts, but determined to face life courageously. Her facial expression is made even more dramatic by the shadows cast on her face.

Piccirilli requested and received permission to spend several weeks in the city morgue before undertaking this commission. Although he does not portray a dead man in this instance, his study of the cadavers in the morgue is demonstrated by the inanimate, almost lifeless body of the dying fireman.

The obvious difficulties entailed in arranging two bodies in such an intricate position have been solved with considerable success. It is not a simple matter to twist and distort a body, such as the fireman's, and still retain the clarity of design which is so necessary for good composition. No one will question the success of the design in this well-organized and well-planned group.

Both sculptural groups are assembled into masterful compositions of plastic form. Their unity of design, compactness of form, simplicity of outline, and nobility of conception, add to the enduring impressiveness of the memorial. Death always brings sorrow and grief, but here emotions are not unbridled. They are dignified, and not excessive. This monumental sarcophagus of classic design was planned by H. van Buren Magonigle, and shows an harmonious combination of Doric and Ionic details. A strong horizontal cornice, its soffit decorated with mutules and guttae, crowns the well-proportioned sarcophagus. Below the projecting cornice is a row of dentils, one of the index marks of the Ionic style. Elegant taste has been shown in the selection of architectural details, particularly the decorative motifs of the flat bands of bas-reliefs which enrich the whole design.

A study of the head designed for the figure of DUTY was



PLATE 21

Maine Memorial Monument, Central Park, 1

FORTITUDE

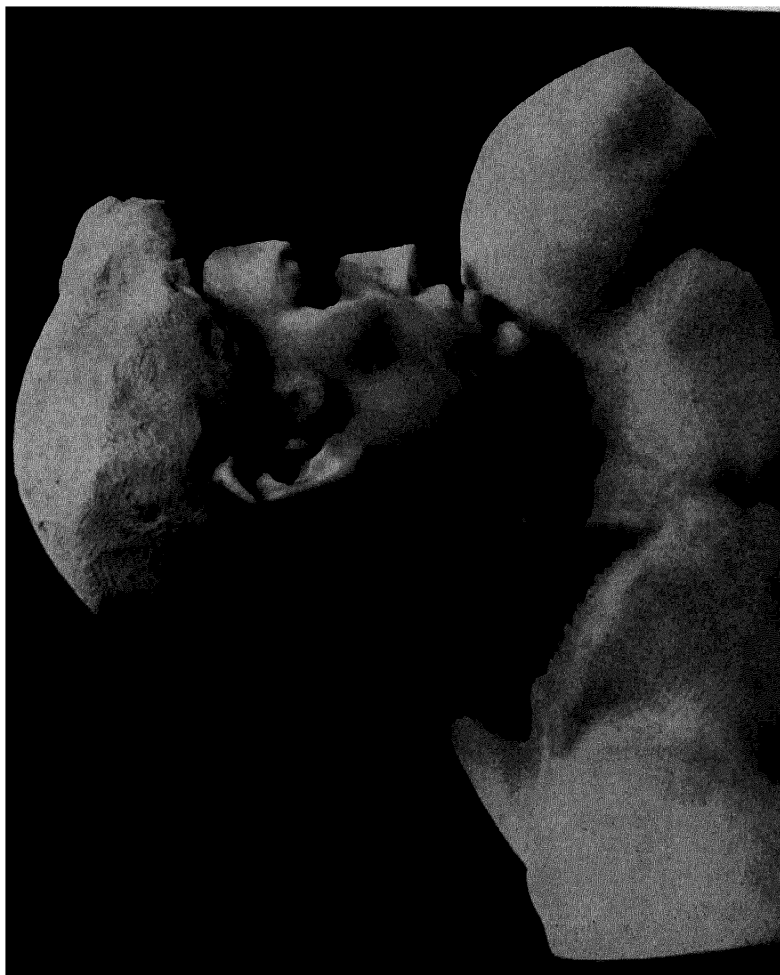


PLATE 22

Collection of the Sculptor

STUDY OF A HEAD



LATE 23

Maine Memorial Monument, Central Park, N. Y

JUSTICE

[143]

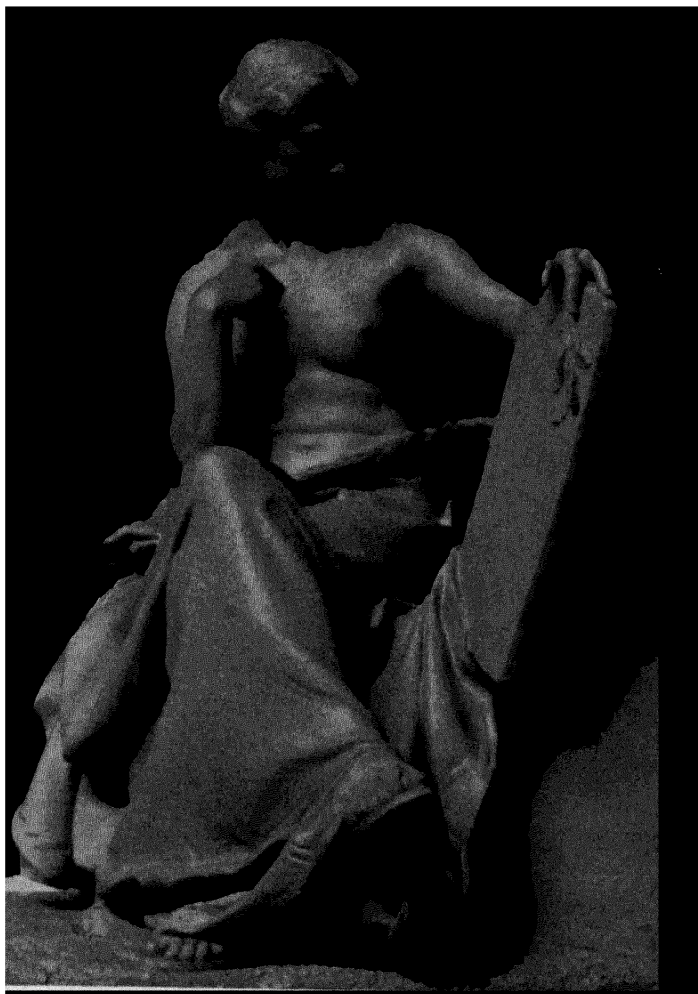


PLATE 24

Maine Memorial Monument, Central Park, New York

HISTORY

purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is a bronze head (Plate 33) devoid of intense feeling and obviously preoccupied in thought. Its compassionate and quiescent expression mitigates the feeling of pathos of the tragic face. She is in thoughtful reflection and one senses almost immediately the feeling of sorrow. Yet, in spite of this sorrow, proclaimed with remarkable restraint, the calm beauty of expression is the most striking feature of the lovely head.

During the time that Piccirilli was hard at work on the MAINE and FIREMEN'S monuments, he received another important commission from the Brooklyn Museum. In 1908, the Directors of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences commissioned Daniel Chester French to supervise the execution of thirty statues to embellish the facades of the Brooklyn Museum. The purpose of this grand undertaking was to represent, in art form, the correlation of the arts and sciences of the various civilizations, ancient and modern. Upon immediate provision of the necessary funds by the City of New York, French began his selection of the most celebrated sculptors in America to carry out the project. The symbolic figures of INDIAN LAWGIVER (Plate 34) and INDIAN LITERATURE (Plate 35) were entrusted to Attilio Piccirilli.

Certain restrictions were imposed upon the sculptors to insure a pleasing harmony of the sculptural undertaking. To achieve this harmonious integration of architecture and sculpture, it was agreed that all figures be approximately twelve feet in height and executed in Indiana limestone, the same material used in the construction of the building. It was further decided that portraiture was to be avoided in favor of a generalized type or personification.

French realized that the Oriental figures, representing

Eastern culture, would have to be designed by a skilled artist with a broad intellectual comprehension in order to solve the apparent difficulties of placing Oriental figures in an Occidental architectonic locale. Similarly, it was thought necessary to preserve with accuracy some of the ethnological characteristics even to detail of costume. In selecting Piccirilli, French had every confidence that the sculptor understood the problem and could carry it out successfully in its entirety. India was chosen to represent the Orient by virtue of the fact that it established the foundation of a rich and glorious culture from which the learning of ancient and modern civilizations emerged.

In the *INDIAN LAWGIVER*, (Plate 34), Piccirilli chose as his ideal a mighty son of a mighty race whom he inspires with wisdom, nobility, and authority, characteristics of the Indian people during the supremacy of their culture. Architectural in conception and execution, the *INDIAN LAWGIVER* stands commandingly with the stability and assurance of an architectural column. Swathed in a heavy robe, the figure reflects a unique quality of architectonic massiveness and strength. A close-fitting turban is gracefully contrasted against an oval face which reveals a profound intellect. Partially closed eyes and slightly parted lips suggest deep thought and meditation. His naked arms, free from the protection of the heavy robe, are drawn together across his chest; the left hand holds a scroll with firmness and determination, while the right hand, with bent and separated fingers, is raised above the left. The dignified gesture of the right hand creates the impression that he will speak momentarily—the gesture is dramatic in its expectation. The pensive, contemplative attitude of the *INDIAN LAWGIVER* seems to be inspired by the axioms in-

scribed on the scroll — the expression of the securely held document is undoubtedly significant.

Broad simple masses and the unity of linear design add considerably to the figure's grandeur. To attain a formidable mass, and to prevent obstruction of the face when viewed from below, the arms were placed close to the body. Diagonals formed by the crossed arms carry the eye with ease to the face. The left leg is slightly bent at the knee to create a diagonal fold which runs from the left foot into the junction of the crossed arms, which in turn brings attention to the face. By cleverly opening the robe at the shoulders to expose the neck and the well-poised head with its high cheek bones, the artist added to the dignity and nobility of the head. "The robe was not drawn tightly about the head," explained the sculptor, "because the head is the seat of wisdom, and wisdom should not be stifled, but should be free to nurture the freedom and liberty of peoples."

The artistic disposition of the figure was carefully considered before the sculptor began work. Numerous sketches in clay and plaster were made to solve the problems of light, perspective, and distortion. Interesting patterns of light-and-dark are effective in the design because of their simplicity.

When first seen by the public, the figure of the INDIAN LAWGIVER was enthusiastically acclaimed, particularly by art men. Its admiration and aesthetic merit must be coupled with an understanding of its meaning, for it is only then that the statue can be completely appreciated. Piccirilli has epitomized in his statue the glory of a race — the majesty of the East and its influence in moulding the thought and culture of all succeeding peoples and ages — which historians have taken countless pages to extol.

The figure of INDIAN LITERATURE (Plate 35) is a person-

ification of an exalted female type whose dignity of bearing commands profound respect. She conveys a consciousness of the infinite power of beauty, and the love of truth and humanity which has always served as an inspiration to all nations and peoples of the world.

She stands with a natural expression—her left hand is held gently over her left breast in an unostentatious attitude of modesty. With closed eyes and sealed lips, the serene expression of the face bespeaks a beauty of soul. Numerous pearls and a double strand necklace, which form two graceful curves, are symbolic of the wealth of India and the beauty of its literature. She holds a long-stemmed lotus flower in her right hand which rests against her shoulder. The flower is a sacred symbol in the literature and art of many Oriental peoples as it represents the fertility of the mind and the inspiration which comes from the study and love of nature.

The naked portion of this well-proportioned and softly modeled figure reveals a feminine charm and shapeliness which is remarkably real. A somewhat heavy mantle with curving folds harmoniously defines the figure. Columnar in treatment, the gown, with its fluted effect, falls gracefully from her hips, demonstrating how adeptly the sculptor interpreted the statue architecturally. Sturdy in construction as the building itself, the plasticity of the figure is made even more apparent by its fine tactile qualities. There cannot be a happier coalescence of the two arts.

The two heroic figures stand majestically against the attic story of the Brooklyn Museum, directly above the giant pilasters of the facade. Representing Eastern culture, they stand appropriately on the eastern facade.

Piccirilli has not only created two beautiful figures, pleas-

ing for their grace and perfection, but has revealed to the western world our indebtedness to the Orient. French's faith in the ability of the sculptor was more than justified by Piccirilli's notable contribution to the development of American sculpture.

Between 1909 and 1915, the sculptor sought to express his conception of the universal idealism of maidenhood by creating several beautiful nudes, varying somewhat in design but equally beautiful in sculptural form, before he attained the perfection of idyllic beauty and feminine idealism which he sought so painstakingly.

A SOUL (Plates 36, 37), the original statue of this group, is the beautiful figure of a woman, who appears to be rising from a kneeling position, as if awakening from deep sleep or meditation. The action, both physically and psychologically, is not fully described — her expression is mystifying in its dreamy and indefinable attitude. There is no trace of worry, pain or grief; she seems to be untouched by human passions, yet her humanity has a tremendous universal quality. She is shrouded in an atmosphere of mystery, made even more enigmatic by her expressionless, lidless eyes, which are mere globular impressions. The mood is calm and serene, at the same time dignified and exalted. She personifies feminine grace and all the fine ideals of womanhood.

Her torso is turned on her hips, and her bowed head, inclined to one side, is resting gently on her right hand. Raised above her head and bent at the elbow, her left arm helps to create a graceful rhythm; her hand falls lightly on the nape of her neck. The position of her left arm is not casually arranged. It has been carefully planned in the composition and its function is to balance the figure which leans backward, creating a left-to-right diagonal, counterbalanced by the right-to-left diagonal position of the arm.

Without this necessary arrangement, the balance of the figure would have been seriously impaired.

For the dramatic effect he achieves, the sculptor relied upon sheer simplicity and beauty of line. The contours are woven together into a fascinating and harmonious rhythm and carry the eye of the spectator with great facility to all parts of the composition. All details have been scrupulously subordinated to the more important problem of form and linear design. In keeping with the soft and irresistible suppleness of femininity, the modeling is delicate and refined with imperceptible gradations of surfaces and planes. The features, too, are severely generalized. The figure is not a portrait of a particular woman, but a portrait of a conception of idealistic womanhood.

The statue met with unanimous and enthusiastic approval when it was exhibited in various sections of the country. In 1912 it was sent to Paris where it received Honorable Mention at the Paris Salon. It was also shown at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915, where it was again applauded. It was exhibited at the Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture in 1918, at the invitation of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The original bronze study of *A SOUL* is in the collection of Fiorello H. LaGuardia.

In spite of its wide acclamation by sculptors and art lovers alike, the sculptor was not completely satisfied that the exquisite statue expressed exactly what he had originally intended. He pondered over this for a long time, and was chided by his brothers for his attitude, but, nevertheless, something inexplicable bothered him. He studied the statue carefully for many months from every conceivable aspect, making numerous sketches, not knowing just what changes were necessary to express the intangible

ideal imbedded in his own imagination. Yet, instinctively, he felt something was needed. He visualized the statue in many different ways, varying its design, then its position, still dissatisfied with the results of his experiments. Finally, one day, he envisaged what he thought he sought, and soon thereafter began to carve another figure which he named FRAGELINA (Plates 38, 39).

This second figure is substantially the same in general appearance, but even more effective as a composition than its prototype. It is two-thirds life-size, somewhat smaller than the original statue, and carved in white marble. Then, too, the longitudinal axis of the body has been noticeably altered (Compare Plate 37 with Plate 38); the medial line or axis of the original describes a far greater curve than this new figure. Moreover, the right hand, which supports the inclined head in the first instance, is now placed beneath the chin to emphasize the ovoid shape of the head to make for greater compactness of design. The face is conventionalized to the point of complete abstraction, and the features, plus the hair, which is tightly bound to the skull in a single mass, are severely subdued to give greater prominence to the linear effect of the elliptical head. In order to retain the general curve of the head without interruptions, the eyes have become slight, almost meaningless bulges; the nose is squat and flattened, and the lips are thin and closely pressed together. In the original, the lips are well-formed and slightly opened.

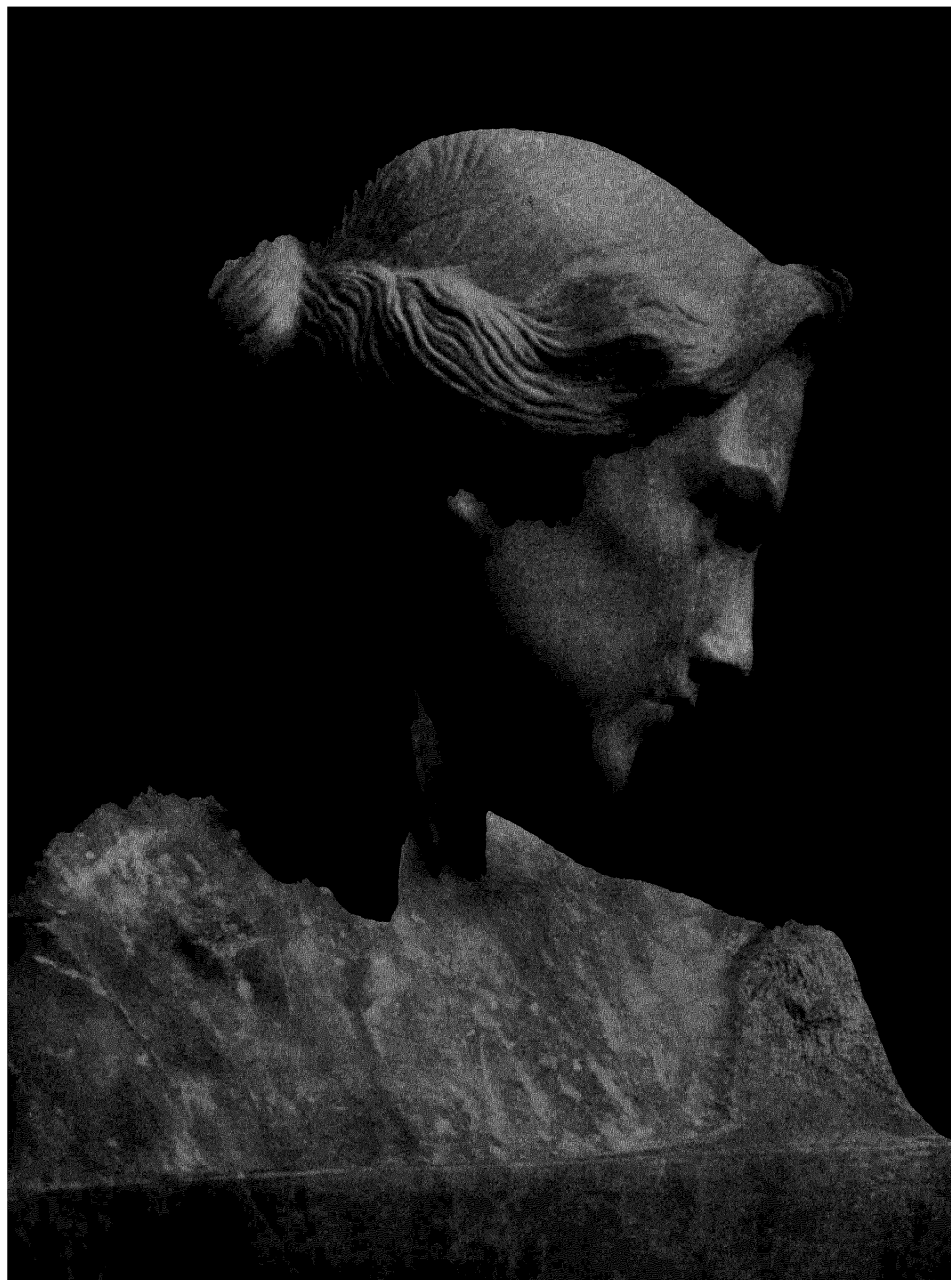
In the final analysis, Piccirilli has reduced the simplicity of the figure to its lowest denominator, beyond which point it would lose its identity completely. Whatever the feeling or thought expressed, it is conveyed through the disposition of the beautiful figure, with the accent still on the beauty of line rather

than on modeling. The apparent generalization of the face with its lack of beauty was deliberate. The sculptor did not wish the statue to attract attention for its facial pulchritude, but for the inherent beauty of the whole figure as he had conceived it. By generalizing the face so severely, which is not too consciously felt by the observer, the sculptor invites every spectator to substitute, unconsciously, his own ideal of beauty. This psychological response is precluded when the features are precisely interpreted, leaving little to the imagination of the observer.

The initial reaction to this statue is one of senuous excitement; subsequent responses are of deep aesthetic pleasure. These reactions are as universally felt as the universality of the conception itself—the responses are within the experience of every person. Emotional reactions, however, awakened by the statue are individualized and depend largely upon the education, associations, and personal differences of the observers.

This statue is an excellent example of Piccirilli's modern-classic style. It embodies the contemporary spirit without the distorted abstractions which reduce sculpture to a geometric or mathematical problem devoid of ideas. Its femininity, expression of lyric feeling, elegance of design, and the dexterous integration and co-ordination of idea, thought, and form are expressions of the artistic sensibilities of the sculptor in his exalted conception of womanhood.

The success and popularity of this second statue induced the sculptor to carve several others of different sizes and of almost similar design. The original FRAGELINA was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1926 (Plate 38). It had already been exhibited at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915; National Sculpture Society in 1923; Architectural League of New York



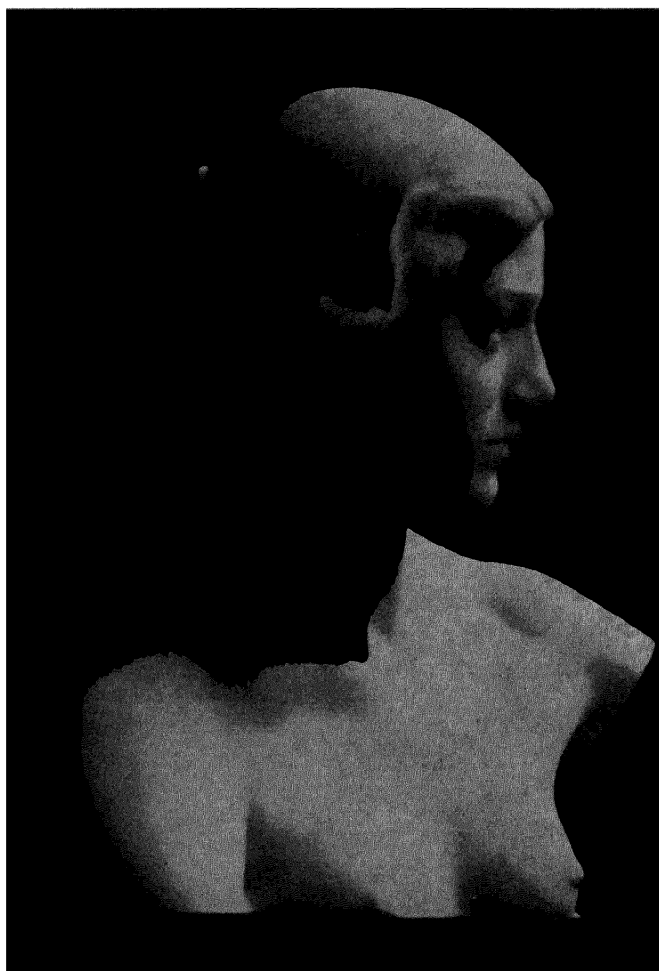


PLATE 26

The John Herron Art Institute, Indianapolis, Indiana

IDEAL HEAD

in 1925; the National Academy of Design in 1926; and the California Palace of the Legion of Honor in 1929. It may now be seen on permanent exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art where its beauty may be admired and enjoyed.

Two of Piccirilli's finest portraits in bronze were designed between 1908 and 1910. MARIA, (Plate 40), the first bronze, is a portrait of his sister-in-law. The head is conceived in terms of simple masses which hold together very well, and which create pleasing curves, repeating themselves many times with interesting variation. For example, the full contours of the face are repeated again in the mass arrangement of the hair, which comes down below both ears and is tied in a knot at the base of the skull. To simulate hair, the artist unfortunately covered the wavy hair with an all-over pattern of incised lines. This device may have been used to indicate a contrast of surface textures between the face and hair itself. The observer is not particularly conscious of this realistic detail, as it is lost in the attractiveness of the plastic whole. It is a sympathetic portrait of a real person, and its wholesomeness is most refreshing.

A portrait of his brother FURIO (Plate 41), is quite different from his other portraits in its treatment. Here he presents the essentials of character with amazing virility and spontaneity, which may be due to the fact that the sculptor knew his subject so well. Furio, who now makes his home in Rome, has won international fame as a sculptor, and his creative talents are borne out by a sensitive and temperamental nature, precisely individualized in this portrait. Attilio has judiciously selected for interpretation only those distinguishing qualities of personality which are assertive and lifelike. The portrait is vigorously realistic and seems

to possess an abundance of nervous energy. Everything is told with clarity, precision and resplendent candor.

The life-size, bronze head, with high forehead, is turned to the right, and is set upon an appropriate pedestal. Simple planes of flesh cover the bony structure of the long head. The eyes are well set, and the chin is firm and strong. A well-groomed mustache adds to the picturesque quality of the portrait. The hair is rendered in plain, interesting masses, and the modeling, subordinated to the general structure, has a vitality and improvisation which is almost impressionistic. Exuberance and imaginative power are attributes of character which, in this instance, are presented without restraint or repression. This fine head was modeled in 1910, and was exhibited in 1911 at the International Exposition at *Villa Borghese* in Rome, Italy.

Working in clay has a decided advantage in portraiture over carving directly in stone. Every bronze statue is also made from an original in clay. In clay modeling, it is possible for an artist to crystalize immediately a fleeting impression of an individual's personality, which he may momentarily grasp, into something tangible. Clay is soft and pliable, and the artist can mold it easily with his fingers into any desired shape or form. This process is not possible in direct stone carving, which is, by its very nature, a long, drawn-out process. Transient impressions, which are often unflatteringly true in their revelation of character, are consequently lost because the artist cannot retain the fleeting glimpses long enough to transcribe them in stone. Therefore, a portrait study made first in clay is likely to be more lifelike and spontaneous than a portrait carved directly into stone. Probably it is due to this fact that the portraits of MARIA and FURIO are vivacious personalities and animated interpretations of living

characters.

The imaginative tales of Greek mythology held an arresting facination for Piccirilli, and his interest in classical myths was manifested at an early age in his career as shown by the figures of the DANCING FAUN (Plates 7, 8) and the YOUNG FAUN (Plate 9). Still another subject derived from mythological sources is his bronze statuette of PARIS (Plate 42).

As the well-known legend is told, Paris was a Trojan prince, who, as a child, was left to die from exposure upon the slopes of Mount Ida. His parents were told that if the infant were allowed to live, he would bring disaster upon Troy. Here he was found by a shepherd who nurtured him to manhood. On hearing that his son was still alive, the repenting father summoned him to return to the Trojan court. But before he returned to Troy, Paris was visited by three goddesses, Hera (Juno), Athena (Minerva), and Aphrodite (Venus). He was given a golden apple which he was to award to the goddess whom he thought the most beautiful of the three. As an inducement to win the golden apple, one goddess offered him power and riches; another the honor and glory which are the natural heritage of the successful warrior; and Aphrodite promised him the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen of Sparta, wife of Menelaus. Upon hearing these words, he immediately awarded the golden apple to Aphrodite, and with her help, Paris succeeded in carrying Helen off from Sparta. This event brought about the Trojan Wars and the subsequent destruction of Troy, a disaster which had been prophesied many years before when Paris was an infant.

PARIS is pictured by the sculptor as a young shepherd whose naked body is partially covered by a leopard skin. He is

shown kneeling on one knee, and in his outstretched hand holds the golden apple which he is supposedly offering. The outstretched arm would ordinarily carry the observer's eye away from the statuette and into space, but the artist wisely introduced a small branch of a tree, held at a slight angle in Paris' left hand, which serves to balance the composition. Another unusual feature is the position of the hand holding the apple. In offering an object to another person, the hand is normally held out in direct line with the forearm. In this particular instance, however, the hand is twisted in a manner which does not appear altogether unnatural but which performs the useful task of returning the eye to the figure. This gesture is graceful and meaningful.

There is a psychological tendency for an observer to look in the direction indicated by the head of a painted figure or statue. In this statuette, the arm follows the same direction of the head's line of vision, making the emphasis in that direction doubly strong. It became vitally important, therefore, for the artist to introduce several elements in his design to counteract this outward influence. One element was the use of the branch; the other, the twisted hand. Such liberties in design can well be taken, especially when working on small-scale figures. This is true in view of the fact that a statuette, when observed, is seen in its entirety as a complete composition. In a large composition, compactness of design is not only desirable, but indispensable, if it is to possess good design and monumentality. Moreover, this statuette has been composed in three dimensions, but really has a two-dimensional point of view. That is, the statuette is intended to be seen from a frontal position, in much the same manner as Myron's famous statue of the *Discus Thrower*.

Piccirilli approaches every problem in sculpture as a prob-

lem in design, and this fact accounts for the subtleties of organization which are worked out instinctively and with predetermination in all his statues. Hence, most of his productions, regardless of intention or purpose, are masterpieces of design, and the statuette of PARIS is a confirmation of that approach. It is a delightful composition with a classical flavor and interest centered on the corporeal beauty of the body rather than on any spiritual or moral quality. This charming figure of the vain and handsome PARIS, whose features bear a close resemblance to Praxiteles' statue of *Hermes*, was acquired for the collection of the National Arts Club of New York. Another copy was presented to Clendenin J. Ryan, Jr., of New York, as a wedding gift from the sculptor.

CHAPTER V

Bas-relief, Mrs. E. H. Harriman House, N. Y. — Bas-reliefs, Edward Drummond Libbey Tomb, Toledo, Ohio — I. Wayman Drummond Bas-relief — The Outcast or Pariah — Twilight or Crepuscolo — Flower of the Alps — Frick Pediments, Frick Reference Library, N. Y. — North Pediment, Wisconsin State Capitol Building, Madison — Agriculture — Science — Broken Vase — Spring Dream — Spirit of Youth, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington — The First Step — Mrs. Fiorello H. LaGuardia Grave Memorial, Woodlawn Cemetery, N. Y. — Young Virgin

Attilio Piccirilli's interest in dancing children is shown by three sculptured bas-reliefs the most magnificent of which was executed for the music room of the Mrs. E. H. Harriman House (Plate 43) in New York City in 1910. The casual formality of the design is relieved by the joyous informality of the dancing and singing children. Two beautifully described youngsters stand in the center of the panel forming the principal motif of the design. They stand elegantly together and go about their singing with novel intent and dignified restraint. The spirit engendered in this bas-relief seems related to that of the *putti* in Luca della Robbia's *Cantoria* in the Museum of the Cathedral of Florence.

Figures of gay children, depicted in a variety of attitudes to show their characteristic restlessness, move zestfully about the

garden setting with carefree abandon. Unlike the **LAGUARDIA GRAVE MEMORIAL** (Plate 61), which exceeds the bounds of monumental art by its insistence on pictorial effects, the garden setting in this instance does not violate the medium as the foliage is rendered in mass-patterns. Attilio makes every effort in this delightful bas-relief to avoid an isocephalic arrangement of figures, a common device in the sculpture of classical antiquity. By placing the heads on various levels and in different planes he creates a very pleasant composition.

Several planes are used to convey the impression of space and the action of the dancing children appears to circumscribe the two central figures. The sculptor shows a sympathetic understanding of the psychology and behavior of children which he studied with great interest. This delectable panel measuring three by eight feet, cannot be surpassed for its elegance and geniality.

Two other panels, one symbolizing **LABOR** (Plate 44) and the other **MUSIC** (Plate 45), carved in low relief are charming but not too effectively constructed. These two panels belong to a series of four bas-reliefs representing Music, Labor, Fine Arts and Architecture which adorn the tomb of Edward Drummond Libbey, founder of The Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio, who was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery of that city. One of the bas-reliefs contains a replica of the facade of the museum.

LABOR is executed in one broad plane and its decorative, flat pattern is attractive enough. Its composition and rhythmic distribution of forms unite all its component parts into a single harmony.

MUSIC shows a group of children playing, singing and dancing. This too is carved in a single plane, but its unity is impaired by the awkwardness of the linear design forming the

right group. This group is not harmonious and its irregular curved contours do not balance the vertical repetition of the seven medial figures. The left side, although more satisfactory, is not wholly successful.

In 1910, the National Sculpture Society desired to honor its secretary, Dr. I. Wayman Drummond. A committee of artists appointed for the occasion commissioned Attilio to design a fitting plaque (Plate 46) which was later cast in silver and presented to Dr. Drummond "in grateful recognition for distinguished service" unselfishly rendered to the Society and in the interest of sculpture in America.

A young sculptor holding a stone-cutter's hammer is shown in creative meditation. In his reclined position he watches the magic of his creative imagination transform an amorphous piece of stone into a sculptural design. An attractively poised model stands beside him—her function is to help him realize in concrete form the inspiration he harbors within him and to carry it to fruition.

It is an elegant bas-relief with an excellent pictorial description of the process of sculptural creation. Attilio had to use all his skill and resourcefulness to depict the purely subjective and psychological story with clarity.

A kindred spirit exists between Michelangelo's figure of *Adam*, in his great fresco of the *Creation of Man*, and the reclining figure of Piccirilli's bas-relief. In this bas-relief, however, the position of the figure has been adroitly changed to enable it to face both the model and the formless block of stone.

THE OUTCAST, OR PARIAH (Plates 47, 48), is an heroic nude and was carved in 1908. It was exhibited in many places including the National Sculpture Society (1908), the International

Exposition held at the *Villa Borghese* in Rome (1911), the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915 (Gold Medal), the Albright Gallery of The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy (1916), and The Architectural League of New York in 1926.

It now stands in its majestic power and immense strength in the spacious gardens of the Church of St. Mark's In-The-Bouwerie, City of New York, where it may be seen silhouetted against a background of cultivated shrubbery and trees. Its setting is ideal—the effectiveness of this gigantic figure would be lessened were it seen indoors where interior space is more restrictive and confining. This overpowering statue is a sanctuary of the artist's innermost feelings. It is a tangible reminder of his desolation and loneliness when he first arrived in America in 1888, in a strange, beautiful land without money and friends. In it he has buried the sorrow of his unhappy married life. No wonder the whole marble bulk is shaken with emotion!

Here is a superb example of how a sculptor can express a definite mood without revealing the face and without weakening the power of its conception. In not exposing the face, the artist gives the spectator the opportunity of substituting his own experience of sorrow and the physical changes wrought on one's countenance. By this psychological device the spectator reinforces the universally understood portrayal of sorrow by his own personal experience. The fulfilment of the artist's conception can only be consummated, then, by the active participation of the observer.

Solemn, with arms folded tenaciously around his bowed head as if to shut out the external world, the OUTCAST is tense with emotion. In spite of its grief, this sublime figure is self-

contained and its tragedy is borne with dignity. It is impressive in its great strength, nobility and universality.

The OUTCAST is one of the sculptor's greatest accomplishments and its monumentality is felt and shared by everyone. The marble of the nude, which Attilio calls God's greatest creation, is electrified with life and vigor and the full impact of its message is imparted to the on-looker with convincing understanding.

Pressing his body against his upraised knees, the seated figure leans forward with folded arms, concealing his face and embracing the upper part of his legs. Mental strain and physical tension are descriptively illustrated by (1) the general contraction of anatomically correct muscles; by (2) the nervous energy released in the bony fingers of the left hand partly covering and firmly gripping the scalp; and by (3) the bent, slightly parted fingers of the right hand tightly grasping his left shoulder in distraction. The tension expressed in the contracted toes of the right foot overlapping the left describes the same idea of mental discomfort. All this is tempered by the good taste of monumental art and by the anxiety of the sculptor to discard the artificial and trivial.

As an art concept in three-dimensions the OUTCAST is a design of proven aesthetic value. Its composition is meritoriously defined and its modeling is vigorous and precise. The presentation of great physical energy and abounding strength is materially aided by the effective rendition of light and shade. Lorado Taft, the American sculptor and writer, called this statue "a powerful and tragic nude."

Small-scale bronze copies of this figure are owned by F. H. LaGuardia and Angelo Patri, educator, two life-long friends of the sculptor. (Cf. Chapter X).

TWILIGHT, or CREPUSCOLO (Plate 49), designed in 1913, is the seated figure of a dreamy-like nude. She is somewhat heavy in proportions and was apparently intended to represent a woman of maturity. Attilio's preference, heretofore, has always been the more tenuous nude which is normally more graceful and subject to greater refinement of mobility and rhythm. This figure, however, is not the only departure from his much preferred slimmer type of female nude as will be shown later in his STUDY OF A WOMAN (Plate 74).

TWILIGHT is suggested in the general attitude of the nude which seems either to be awakening or preparing to retire. Whichever it may be, her weariness is impersonal and mysteriously strange. This dual aspect was dictated by the expediency of illustrating the solar division of that part of the day between midnight and sunrise, or between sunset and full night, the natural phenomenon of twilight.

With arms upraised, she appears on the verge of awakening her heavy, languid body with its firm breasts, narrow waist and fleshy abdomen. Its meaning is illusive, almost enigmatic—the figure defies one to define the specific mood expressed. She sits heavily on a high irregular block of marble from which she was hewn, oblivious of her surroundings.

A triangle, with her head as its apex, is formed by bending both arms at the elbow—the physical gesture seems to offset the totally impassive body. Large masses of firm flesh completely conceal the underlying bone structure; her arms, legs and torso are well-rounded and the entire impression is one of wholesomeness and salubrity. A chignon is formed at the nape of the neck by her hair which is pulled away from her face exposing a prominent forehead and shapeless, inanimate eyes. One leg is

raised half-way, while the other stretches lazily down to the bottom of the pedestal. She leans definitely to her left side and the upper part of her body is turned gently on its torso. She seems to embody tremendous latent energy, in spite of her lethargic attitude, which, like the physical properties of the sun, is activated and felt during daylight but fades away to become latent energy again at night.

TWILIGHT is well-contained as a plastic representation and the eye moves about her expansive contours without harsh interruptions and with pleasing satisfaction. One of the unpleasantries of this nude is that at least one part of her body is sharply foreshortened no matter where one stands.

FLOWER OF THE ALPS (Plate 50) was inspired by a painting *Among the Rocks* by a little-known American painter, A. Coomans. From the beginning of time artists have inspired and influenced each other by their creations, just as they have treated the same traditional subjects throughout the history of art with varying degrees of success and effectiveness. Usually this difference is one of aesthetic content which distinguishes mediocrity from nobility. This condition seems to prevail in this instance.

Attilio's FLOWER OF THE ALPS is an animated work, exquisitely lovely with a strong lyric quality. Her full length is stretched exuberantly across the irregular curvature of the rugged rock—she pulsates with abundant life and is ever conscious of her own vitality and feminine beauty. She seems to revel in the glories of nature and the invigorating atmosphere to which she responds with sparkling vivacity. Her arms, outstretched with random joy, reveal her complete satiety and freedom from care.

She is perched gracefully on her toes as if she were about to dance—the dynamic rhythm of the dance is felt throughout

her whole body. Yet, she does not move! Rhythmic beauty has been personified. The sculptor has turned poet!

A striking contrast is achieved by the sharp distinction between the texture of the naked body and that of the coarse, stone background. Attilio has created a beautiful nude with a sensuous, attractively-proportioned figure which evokes tactile sensations. Her body is without too much flesh; she is youthfully supple yet mature, and poised to create a dynamic, sweeping curve which carries the observer from one end of her lithesome body to the other.

The linear structure and quality of design leave little to be desired. Grace of bodily movement, beauty of sculptural form and idealization of concept have been happily united. She has been conceived with a minimum of detail; the contours move rapidly with bustling vitality in their cleancut profiles and the planes of the body merge with each other with pure simplicity. As in all his nudes, the face is again expressionless except that here one senses the subjective. The hair is woven into the rock in sculpturesque fashion and is organically part of it; the hands remain ever beautiful and expressive of the inner being. *FLOWER OF THE ALPS* is serene and imaginative with a strong poetic strain.

This life-size nude, exhibited many times throughout the country, was awarded many prizes including the George D. Widener Memorial Gold Medal at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1917. It was carved in 1914 and copies of it are in the R. S. Norwood Collection, Indianapolis, Indiana; the Irving T. Bush Collection, New York; and the Gustav Oberlaender Estate in Reading, Pennsylvania. Other copies are owned by Alexander N. Bowers, San Antonio, Texas; and G. M. Adams, New York. The

sculptor presented the original study for this figure, called the RAINBOW, to Mrs. Charles P. Pollard, Rye, N. Y.

Two curvilinear pediments of low pitch were designed in 1913-14, for the Frick Reference Library on Fifth Avenue in New York. Both pediments, one representing ORPHEUS, the other SCULPTURE, face Seventy-first Street. The private residence of H. C. Frick was designed by Carrère and Hastings, architects, and later enlarged and transformed into a public art museum and library.

In one pediment (Plate 51), the male figure of ORPHEUS, a legendary musician borrowed from Greek mythology, is seated in the center intently playing a lyre which he is credited with having invented. According to legend, ORPHEUS charmed wild beasts and enchanted trees with his melodious music. This explains the use of trees, ordinarily not treated in sculpture, but in this instance a necessary part of the story narrated.

ORPHEUS rests against the stubby trunk of a tree while he plays with his ear held close to the lyre. A lioness, enchanted by the music, rests its head across his right leg, while two children or *putti*, frightened by the sight of the beast, raise their hands to their faces in horror. One child holds a grotesque mask to conceal its face. Two other children are seated in the other angle of the pediment—one plays a musical instrument, which might be an anachronism, and accompanies the singing of the other child. All the figures are engulfed by the trees which form a diverting and unifying background. The foliage, strangely sculpturesque in character, is pleasantly varied and extends upward to break the monotony of the cornice moulding.

Grouped in pairs, the figures of the children are naturalistic and pleasingly arranged. Each group fits into its pedimental

angle quite well. A slight inclination of the children towards the central figure of Orpheus leads the eye to the center of interest. If anything, the pediment is too generously filled with sculptural forms for its low pitch.

The second pediment (Plate 51) contains the figure of a beautiful woman representing SCULPTURE. She sits gracefully and with ease, resting against the marble figure of a torso which she is presumably carving. A sculptor's chisel is held in her left hand, while in her right hand she holds the sculptor's mallet. The figure is carved with marked simplicity and its beauty and dignity are similarly pleasing.

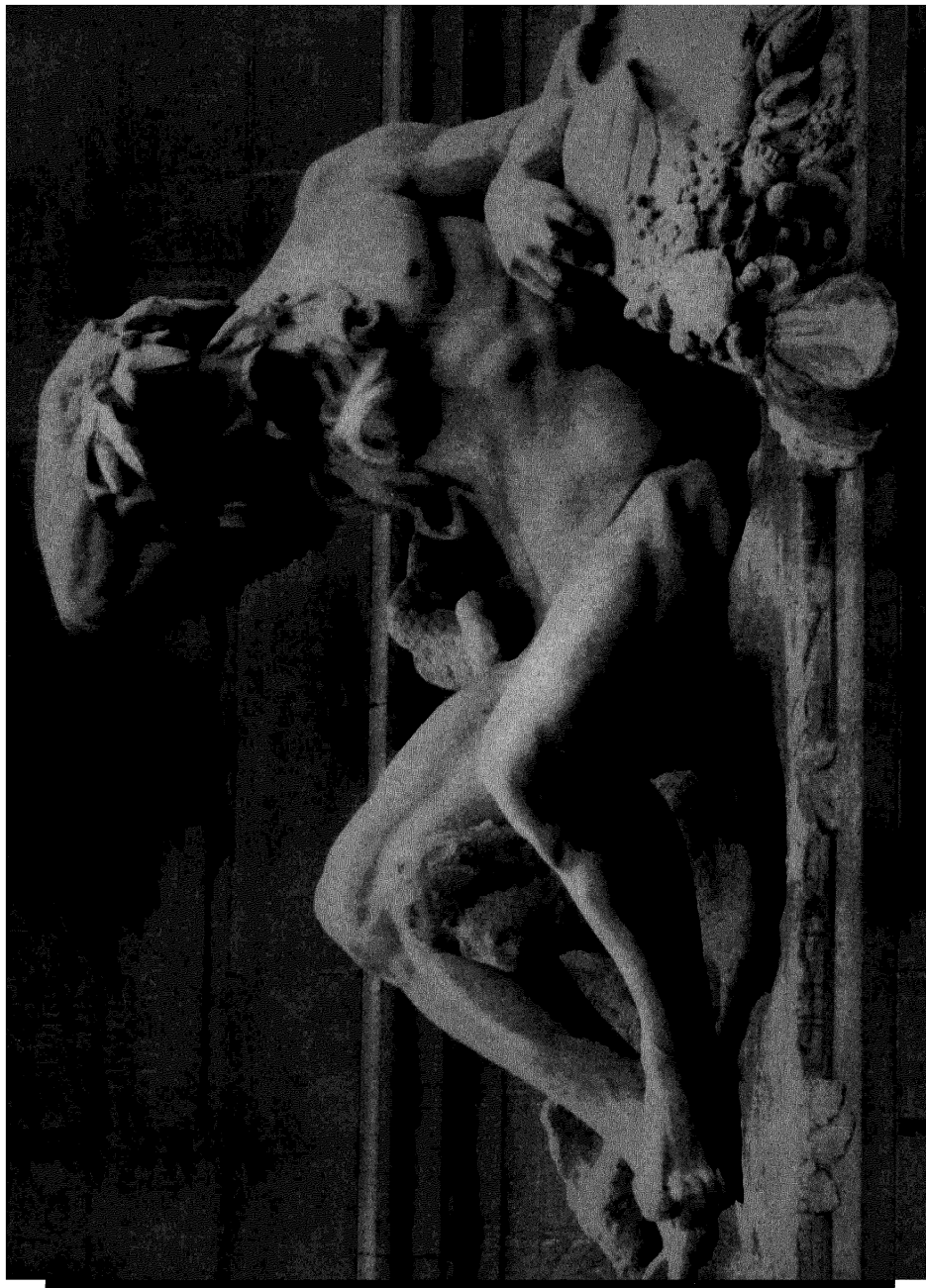
Both angles of the pediment are filled with pairs of children busily engaged in an activity. To the right of the female figure of SCULPTURE are two children seen examining a tall vase held between them. Two other children are seen in the opposite angle reading from a manuscript opened across the lap of one of them who holds a pair of dividers.

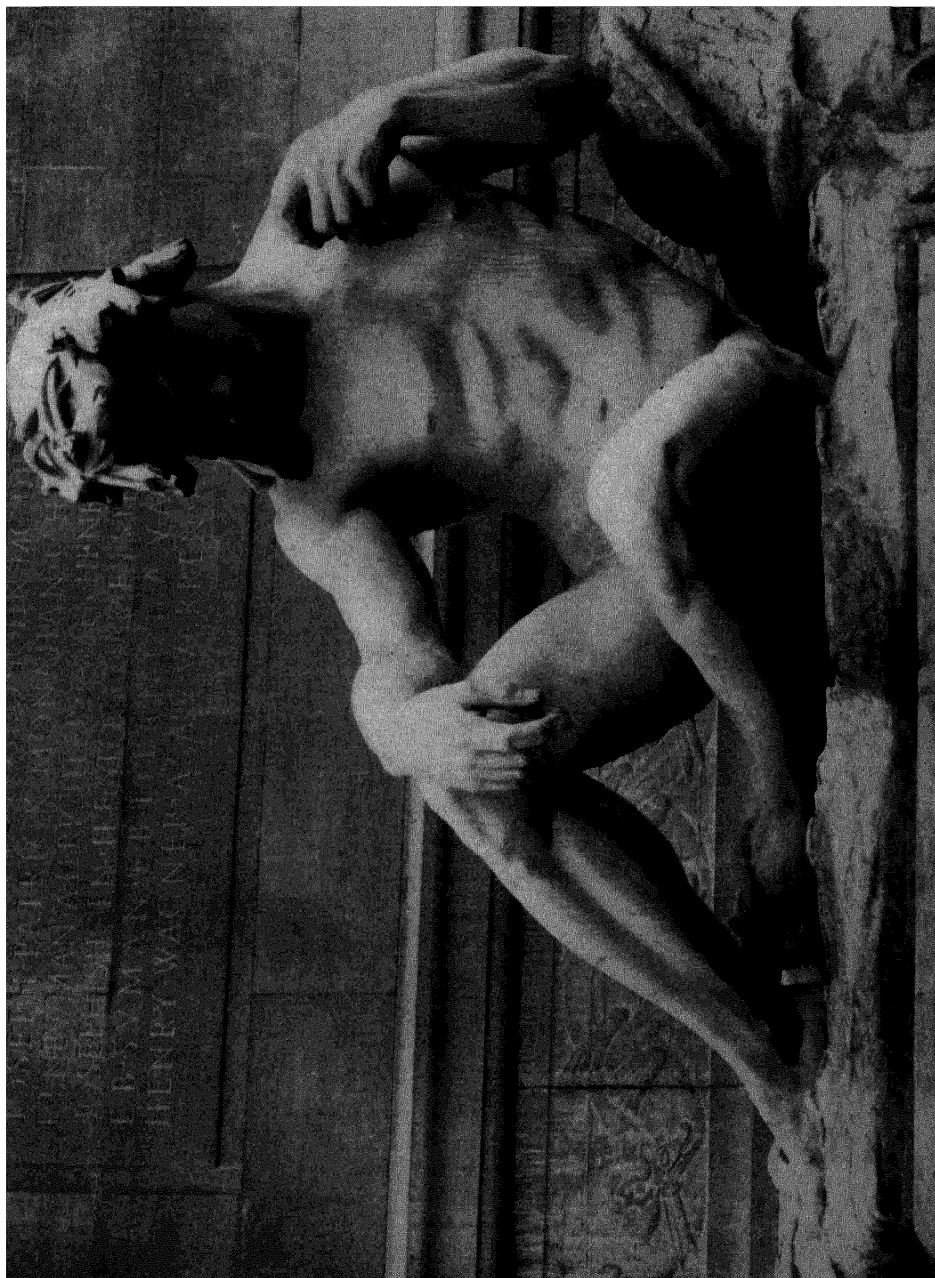
As in the first pediment, the action of the children moves towards the center. A large flowing drapery extends across the entire background and helps to integrate the whole design. The cornice moulding is again broken to relieve its monotony.

As a sculptural composition, the pediment symbolizing SCULPTURE is superior to the one representing ORPHEUS. It is less crowded and generally better conceived and understood.

Both pediments are raised on a large, expansive wall unbroken by windows or other openings. The pediments were essential adjuncts to an otherwise uninteresting wall surface which the architects felt had to be enlivened by some appropriate form of sculptural decoration.

Attilio Piccirilli was chosen in 1915 by the Art Commis-





sion of the State of Wisconsin to design the pedimental sculpture for the north portico of the new State Capitol Building in Madison.

Subjects representing the evolution of civilization and the progress of man's development — to which the thought and wisdom of all races on earth have contributed — were selected. This group of statuary (Plates 52, 54) portrays the story of human history from the earliest times to the present day and, similarly, links Wisconsin with her past. It is a beautiful and well-told story written in stone; an interesting and elevating sermonette on the progress of the ages in the fields of industry, philosophy, and the fine arts, and the ennobling power of religion.

A beautifully robed female figure, architectonic in general appearance, stands with dignified bearing in the center of the pediment holding a tablet across her chest upon which the word *Sapientia* is inscribed. She represents wisdom and enlightenment, and this spirit is transmitted to all the other figures of the pedimental family.

An elegantly poised female figure (Plate 53), leading the group to the right of the central figure, holds a rake in her clasped hands — she symbolizes AGRICULTURE, man's first mighty task which cultivated and subdued the earth and transformed the wilderness into fruitful and fertile fields. Her hands are joined together and rest upon the handle of the rake while her left foot is raised upon the central platform. This gesture may seem casual but is intended to show the union and interdependence of learning and science. Sturdy in construction and well-formed in body, she stands with head inclined in deep reverie. This figure is a truly remarkable piece of sculptural composition.

A farmer stands directly behind her with feet apart but

firmly implanted in the ground—a stance which seems to show his close kinship to the soil upon which he is dependent for his subsistence. It is a muscular figure, rugged and powerfully conceived. Brawny, sinewy muscles, compatible with his outdoor life, are also indicative of the farmer's hard labor and industry. A piece of cloth containing seed is held with his left hand and is fastened about his waist—he is seen in the process of sowing seed.

A mother holding a newborn child supports herself by placing her left hand firmly on the shoulder of her farmer-husband. Her body inclines forward and her legs are kept apart for better support. These expediciencies of composition are employed by the artist to enable him to fit the group into the sloping sides of the triangular pediment. The mother-and-child personify maternity and the group is emblematic of the home and family, the foundation of every society and the strength of all nations. She is seen approaching the shrine of Wisdom, in quest of the knowledge to instruct and guide her child to maturity. Upon his life, the hope and future of civilization depends. The tremendous responsibility involved in this task, the seriousness and conscientiousness with which the mother faces her problem, is brought out by the sculptor in the significant pose of this figure. Her interest in the progress and welfare of her husband, and her dependence upon him, is suggested by her hand resting on his shoulder. The mother-and-child also symbolizes nature's fecundity and is a reminder that life itself is dependent upon the soil's fruitfulness for survival. The three figures together represent a well-planned and effectively organized group.

Two seated figures, forming a closely-knit triangular composition, are skilfully designed to fit into the narrow angle to

the extreme right of the figure *SAPIENTIA*. The man seems to lean far forward over a lyre embraced in both arms and the woman, with head bowed in deep contemplation, rests her left arm on an Ionic capital of classical design. They represent the *FINE ARTS, MUSIC, and POETRY*. The arrangement and allocation of this group is highly successful—this cannot be said of the two figures, male and female, which occupy a corresponding position to the extreme left of *SAPIENTIA* and represent philosophy, geometry and the sciences. In this instance, the figures appear crowded and seem to lean heavily against one another. The male figure rests his right arm naturally on an anvil in front of him and seems to sit more comfortably. Although the two figures jointly fill the space adequately enough, the woman is too disturbing in her awkward and strained position.

Another group (Plate 55) consisting of three figures, immediately to the left of the central figure, symbolizes physics and engineering. In composition, the group is similar to the one on the opposite side. A female figure representing science and electricity is seen guiding an engineer whom she escorts by the hand. In turn, the engineer has cast his left arm protectingly over the shoulders of another male figure representing a miner, whom he guides and supports. To enable the miner to fit into the sloping side of the pediment he is shown crouched dangerously forward but is, nevertheless, equilibrated. This group illustrates the dependence of one man upon another—the miner looks to the engineer for direction and guidance and the engineer looks to science for his knowledge to assist the miner.

When perceived as a whole, the pedimental sculpture is composed of five groups—a central figure flanked laterally by two groups, each consisting of three figures, and two smaller

groups of two figures each occupying the smaller angles of the triangle. Twelve figures of heroic size constitute the entire sculptural ensemble.

The action of all figures moves in the direction of the central figure of *SAPIENTIA*. A continuity of line and movement is maintained, based upon a psychology of linear composition, which unifies the whole pediment with great success. Many technical problems had to be considered and their solution is more than satisfying. Distortion of figures, perspective, deep shadows cast by the heavy, over-hanging, raking cornice, and the problem of light are all meticulously considered and well-managed in their ultimate result. The figures themselves are conceived with interesting variety and rendered in bold sculpturesque style. All movement, which takes place before the unifying background of the tympanum wall, culminates at the logical focal point, namely, the central figure representing Wisdom. Wisdom, according to the thought proclaimed throughout the action of the pedimental figures, is the product of learning and human experiences from which spring the nobler thoughts and achievements of man. This thought has been descriptively expressed by *Attilio*.

The pediment stands more than four stories high and is silhouetted against the imposing dome of the State Building. When viewed from below the effect is majestic and exciting.

This pedimental group, with its historical significance woven into an aesthetic pattern of great dignity and beauty, speaks out more eloquently of man's progress on earth than any written record.

The *BROKEN VASE* (Plate 56) is a bronze statuette of a seated woman and was intended as a study for a larger and more

beautiful statue of a nude, *SPRING DREAM* (Plates 57, 58), mentioned in Chapter X. A broken vase lies on the pedestal near the left thigh of the nude. The juxtaposition of formal masses unencumbered by unnecessary detail is a skilful narration of the nude body. In designing *SPRING DREAM*, Attilio was careful to avoid the same position of the right hand which hides the nude's face in the statuette—this gesture, however, is not without significance, as will be seen later.

In the life-size marble of *SPRING DREAM*, the face is entirely exposed with the chin resting gently on her right hand. Except for this detail and the elimination of the broken vase from the design, *SPRING DREAM* is very similar in its general distribution of structural parts—although there is a suggestion that the position of the body has undergone a slight change. In both instances the figures are so well-contained that there is little likelihood of the eye wandering away. *SPRING DREAM* has been shorn of almost every detail for greater emphasis on form. This simplification of the body structure was achieved to accentuate its aesthetic effect. The irregularity of the high marble base with its deep tool marks is more suitable as a pedestal for a large figure and is far more successful than the shallow circular base of the bronze statuette. The surface texture of the nude is interestingly differentiated from the surface of the marble pedestal with its all-over design of chisel marks. These improvements are the natural results of preliminary studies later used as prototypes for larger designs.

Attilio still recounts with amusement the unexpected difficulty encountered in modeling his original study. For his model of this figure, he used a well-proportioned, black-eyed girl of nineteen who came to his studio weekly over a period of several months until the statue was completed. She proved an excellent

model and at the beginning her body was attractive, young and radiant.

As Attilio's work progressed, however, he discovered that new measurements were necessary at almost every sitting and that however often he executed changes and corrections to conform with the model, his clay study never quite measured up to the model's proportions. His study seemed almost to be shrinking in size. The more he pondered on the bewildering situation the more puzzled he became. Only after several months did he realize what was actually taking place. Could it be true? He knew she was unmarried, and yet? If his suspicions were true, he had to rush full speed ahead to the statue's completion before this wonder of nature made further posing absolutely impossible. If it were true, he might also understand the strange behavior of a young sculptor who appeared one day out of nowhere seeking employment in Attilio's studio without remuneration. Refused, he asked whether he might do a handyman's job around the studio. Attilio asked the young man to return the next day. Meanwhile, he mustered up sufficient courage that same day to ask his model whether it were true. "Yes," she replied shamefacedly, and added that the young sculptor acting so peculiarly was her lover. He was employed.

There was no time to be lost now, so sittings were scheduled more often and Attilio worked at a feverish pace until he completed his statue. The shame felt by this charming young girl is reflected in the bronze statuette, and the hand which covers her face becomes descriptive of her indiscretion and embarrassment.

Two copies of the **BROKEN VASE** were cast. One is in the

collection of The National Academy, the other is owned by John Hill Morgan of New York.

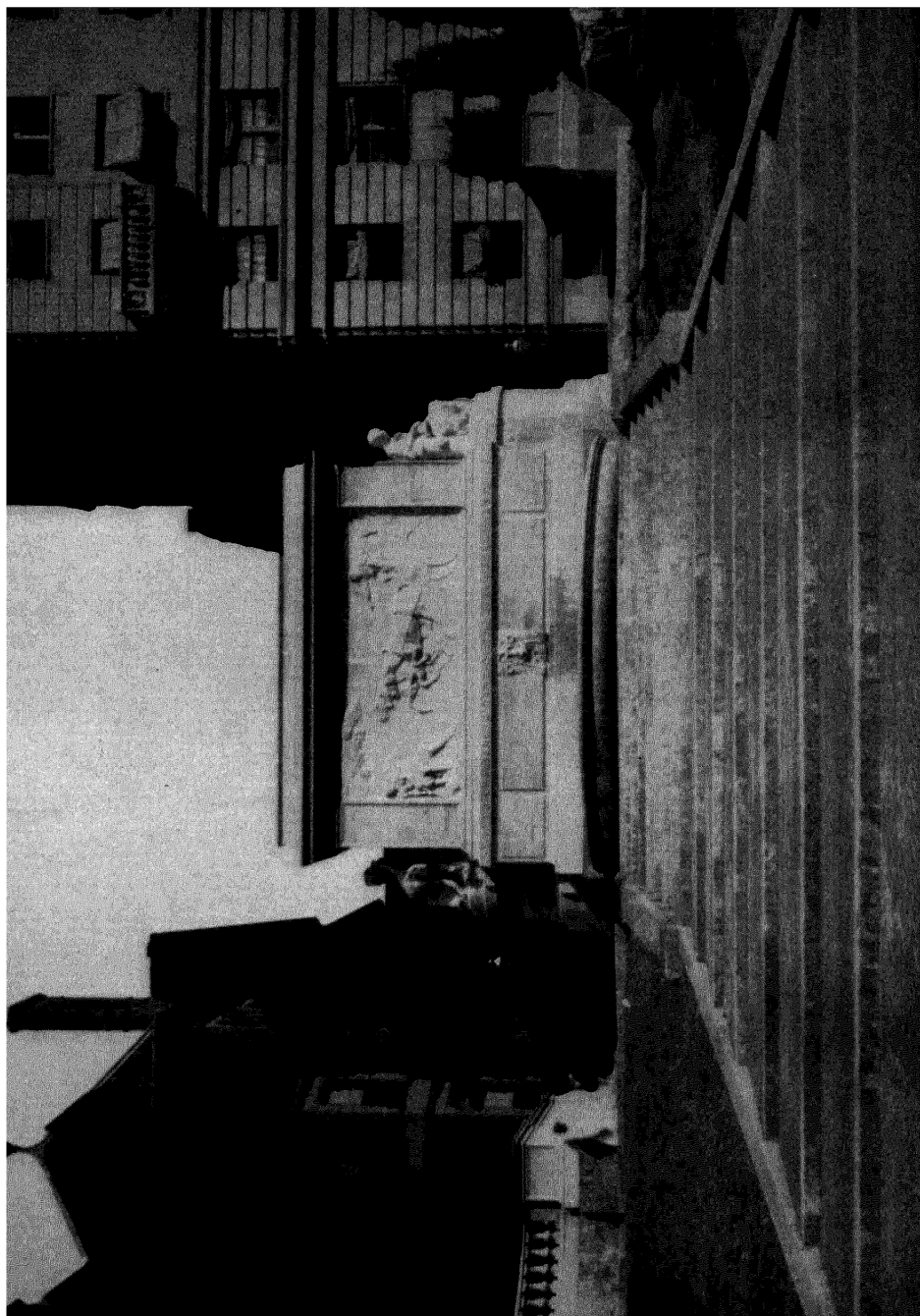
There are also three marble copies of *SPRING DREAM*. One was acquired by the Academy of Sciences and Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia; another is in the Collection of Mrs. E. S. Evans, Detroit; and the third copy was recently purchased by R. M. Blair of Richmond, Virginia. In 1926, the National Academy of Design awarded Piccirilli the J. Sanford Saltus Gold Medal for its "artistic merit." It was also exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (1918), the Sesquicentennial International Exposition in Philadelphia (1926), the California Palace of the Legion of Honor (1929), and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia (1943).

Virginia Military Institute in Lexington can well be proud of the gift presented to it by Mrs. William H. Cocke in 1939, in memory of her husband Brigadier-General William Horner Cocke, Fourth Superintendent of the Academy.

The gift is a statue of a young man carved in Carrara marble, towering twelve and a half feet in height, and typifies the *SPIRIT OF YOUTH* (Plate 59). An ivy-screen twenty feet high, flanked by yews and boxwood, forms the background for this stalwart nude.

Its history dates back to 1918 when the statue was inspired by the valor of the young men who fought and won the decisive victories in the Battle of the Piave, in World War I. *SPIRIT OF YOUTH* is indeed a fitting memorial for a military academy.

In 1923, Attilio made a life-size plaster model of the nude and exhibited it at the National Sculpture Society exhibition of that year where it was enthusiastically received. Its acclaim in 1925, when it was again exhibited at the annual exhibition of





Firemen's Memorial Monument, Riverside Drive, N. Y.

PLATE 30

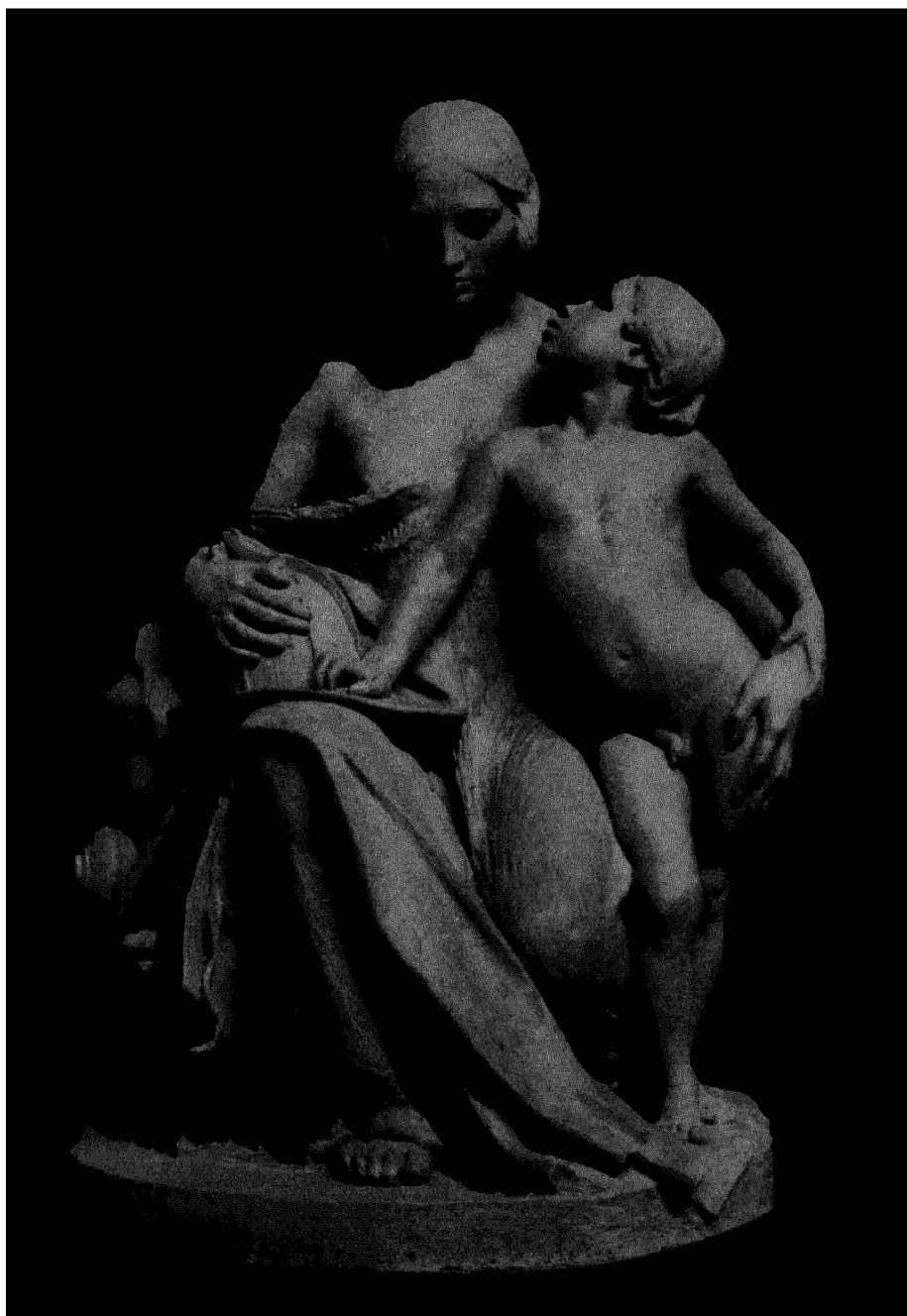


PLATE 31

Firemen's Memorial Monument, Riverside Drive, N

DUTY

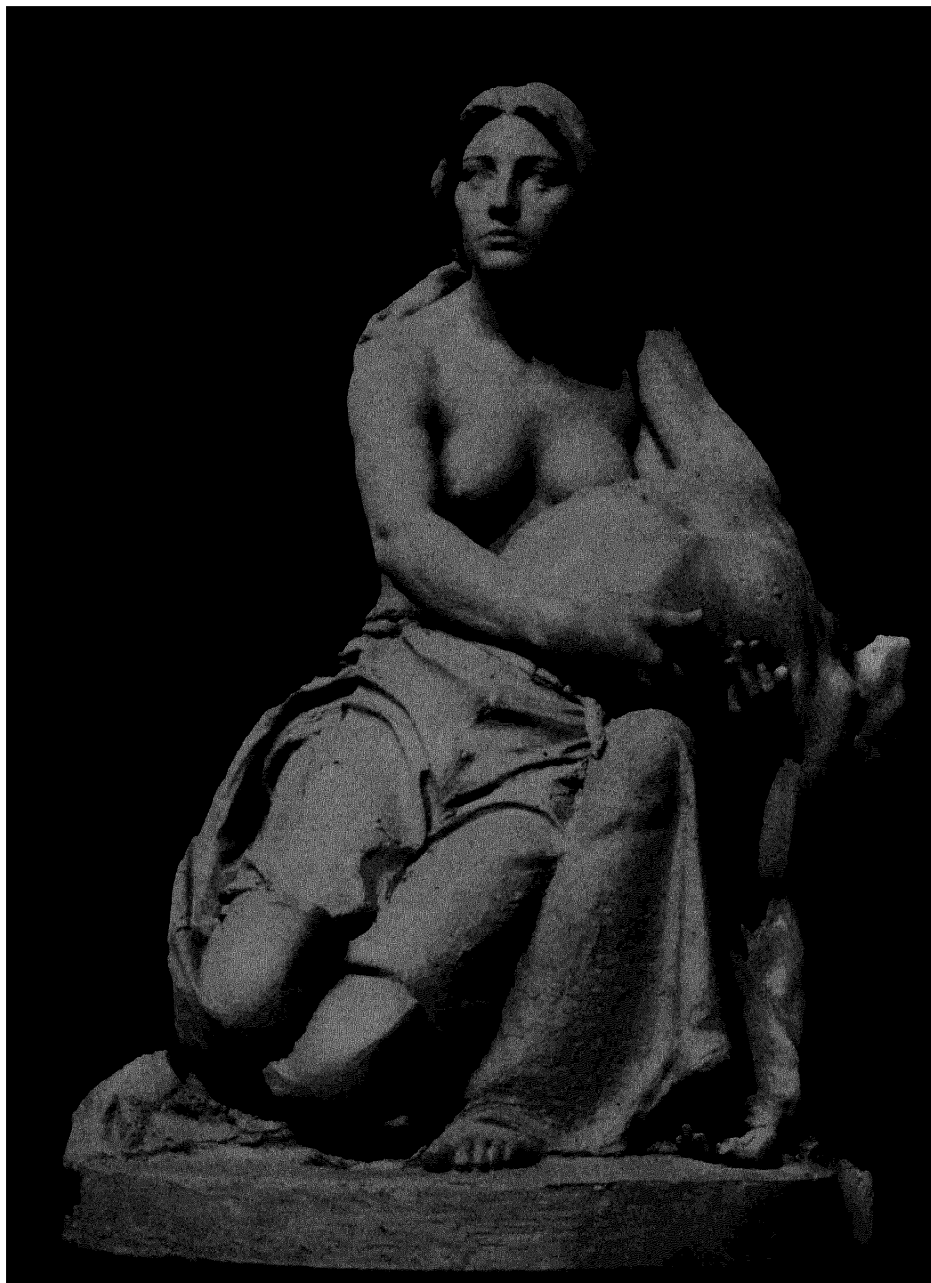


PLATE 32

Fremont's Memorial Monument, Riverside Drive, .

COURAGE

the musculature of the well-disciplined nude is tense throughout with abounding energy. Also, it would seem improper to represent a man, a moment before engaging in a fierce struggle for survival, in a graceful posture. For this reason, Attilio depicts his nude with taut tendons, closely-knit joints, and distended muscles radiant with nervous energy, without creating a feeling of harshness. Attilio's figure lacks the detailed anatomical structure of *David*, without sacrificing or impairing the idea of great physical strength. Calmness in sculpture is always amenable to graceful compositions. Very often distortion is used effectively to reinforce an idea. The slight suggestion of angularity and awkwardness found in the SPIRIT OF YOUTH is in keeping with the moment of physical tension portrayed.

Michelangelo's *David* is that of a sixteen-year-old boy with characteristically large head, hands and feet. He stands about eighteen feet in height. Attilio's youth is about twenty, a husky lad with lean, well-developed muscles on a sturdy well-built frame. His whole body is tense and ready for the approaching combat.

Attilio's statue personifies youth and in it he shows the daring, confidence and fearlessness of the younger generation. He always carves hands with such significant expression — in this statue the tension of the right hand, held a few inches from his body, is a symbol of determination and reflects the vibrating energy of well co-ordinated muscles. The tense muscles of the legs, arms and torso; the distended muscles of the neck; the dilated arteries of the forearm; the arched brows; the inflated nostrils and open mouth, presage the on-coming struggle. The SPIRIT OF YOUTH seems sure of its strength and the outcome of the impending battle. Power and undaunted will are manifested by the timely

synchronization of mind, matter and purpose which transcends every other consideration. To youth falls the fate and glory to defend the ideals of liberty and to preserve the dignity of the free mind. His sacrifices are made in the interest of mankind and for the amelioration of the human race. In his nude, Piccirilli reminds us of all this.

THE FIRST STEP (Plate 60), a bronze statuette of a child, was designed in 1917, two years before Fiorello H. LaGuardia was married, and given to him as a wedding gift by the sculptor. As a wedding token, this charming little figure is looked upon as a symbol of fecundity.

With characteristic uncertainty, the child attempts to take its first step unaided. It is about to move forward with its arms thrown out instinctively for better balance, and its feet awkwardly apart for better support and to steady a wavering body. The little, chubby figure stands on a circular base and possesses the genial charm of all infants.

Three copies of this figure were cast for Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia who distributed them as presents to Nicholas Longworth, one-time Speaker of the House of Representatives; Joseph D. McGoldrick, Comptroller of the City of New York; and David Rockefeller, son of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and one-time secretary to Mayor LaGuardia. The sculptor gave another copy to Angelo Patri, and to Clendenin J. Ryan, Jr. as a wedding present.

It was not long after Attilio conceived THE FIRST STEP that he began work on another sculpture occasioned by the death of Mrs. Fiorello H. LaGuardia. A life-size commemorative plaque in marble (Plate 61) was carved for Mrs. LaGuardia's grave who died several months after the death of her one-year old

daughter, Fioretta. The mother and child are buried in the same grave in Woodlawn Cemetery, New York City. Mrs. LaGuardia's death was deeply felt by Attilio who had known her well.

The mother is shown seated in a field of flowers with outstretched arms, beckoning her child to walk towards her. With faltering steps, the child moves hesitantly forward in an attempt to reach its mother. Several long-stem roses symbolizing love rest across the mother's lap. Tall, full-grown lilies, representing peace in death, rise mournfully behind her. The child is pictured in a patch of budding flowers from which it seems to emerge. Aside from its too pictorial character, the design of the bas-relief is very decorative and expresses a gentle sentiment.

From the point of view of design alone the bas-relief is successful, but the treatment of natural elements with its strong linear quality does not approach the excellence of Attilio's other bas-reliefs. Landscape does not generally lend itself to effective portrayal in stone—it can be more appropriately represented and more convincingly expressed in painting—its pictorial character detracts from its aesthetic monumentality because it is foreign to the three-dimensional medium. In this instance, sculpture has been carried beyond its natural bounds and it has been made to perform a function which is definitely better expressed in another medium.

Pictorial effects were reproduced in sculpture as early as the Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations and this was especially true in the Hellenistic period of Greek Art. Jacopo della Quercia (1375-1438) revived the practice in Italy during the early development of Renaissance sculpture, and Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1455), in his celebrated *Gates of Paradise* de-

veloped the illusionistic effects of sculpture to a far greater degree than anyone before him.

In Attilio's bas-relief the figure of the child and portrait head of the mother are superb. Mrs. LaGuardia's body structure, however, is inarticulate and unconvincing; its contours are undefined and composed of numerous unrelated lines which lack agreement and destroy its plasticity. On the other hand, the beauty and delicacy of the mother's hands are unsurpassed. Idealistic, full of meaning and expression, the hands seem to recall the "portrait" hands of the *Bust of a Young Woman* by Andrea del Verrocchio in the Bargello at Florence.

When Daniel Chester French made one of his many visits to the Piccirilli Studio and saw the YOUNG VIRGIN (Plate 62) for the first time, he drew up a chair and sat down before the figure in silence and deep thought. His approbation could be felt by his manner and revered intentness. Finally, he turned to Attilio and said, "You have taken the life of this girl and put it in stone for eternity. She needs but a heart-beat to speak."

A well-known fellow-artist prevailed upon Attilio to carve this statue, suggesting that his young daughter model for it, but he demurred. This comely young lady was at the stage of puberty in her physical development and her father saw something inimitably beautiful in the natural transformation gradually taking place. He thought he could not with propriety have his own daughter pose for him in the nude to record this morphological phenomenon and so suggested that Attilio interpret this transition from adolescence to adult-life in his own way. Attilio finally accepted the challenge it offered and soon thereafter began work on the statue.

For a long time he labored with the idea of suggesting

this transmutation in marble. There could be no other way, he thought, than to show the change from a block of shapeless stone to that of a young lady approaching womanhood. Instead of carving the figure with well-defined contours, he demonstrated the transition from the stone to that of reality by the simple process of showing that the right hand had not yet emerged completely from the stone block. The long, tapering fingers held comfortably apart have not yet taken shape and are still part of the original organism. That hand is most significant as it also shows that the transformation has not yet reached maturity and the period of full development. This thought, when applied to the statue itself, cannot be more descriptive in its explanation of what is taking place.

It is not hard to understand what prompted Daniel Chester French to remark that no other sculptor in his wide experience was capable of carving hands so beautifully, so expressively and full of meaning.

Attilio is always at his best in rendering the female nude. Puberty implies certain behavior characteristics which do not escape him in this study. Consequently, he describes the timid wariness and bashful disposition of young girls by the careful arrangement of the figure alone. Her right leg is bent and held closely against her body to conceal her naked breasts from the observer, and her right shoulder is held uncomfortably high in a modest gesture to shield her face. She is not shown in a relaxed position for she is consciously aware of her nudity. Everyone understands the mood and delicacy of the situation.

Its composition resolves itself into a simple triangular form and is more effectively seen from a frontal position. The simplicity of contours and subtly described masses contribute to the

grandiose effect. Her flesh is young and firm and covers the bone-structure without diminishing its trim, youthful vigor. Her face, with its head resting lightly on one shoulder, is expressionless. Her eyes and mouth are shapeless and her hair is drawn tightly over her skull to accent the oval shape of the head. Except in portraiture, facial beauty in Attilio's female nudes is always sacrificed and made subservient to the beauty of the whole body. For this reason the entire figure has been severely generalized, and abstracted with a bold disregard for details, reducing the nude to its simplest terms. There is no intent to individualize but to personify a natural physiological change.

Except for the absence of distorted proportions, the stress placed on the importance of the abstract quality of lines, masses and planes suggests the present-day idiom in sculpture. In this beautiful figure of the YOUNG VIRGIN, carved in Verona marble, Attilio successfully captures the contemporary spirit without abandoning or denying nature. The whole concept has an unrivaled charm and elegance; the interpretation is sympathetically masterful; and the composition itself is exquisite for its aesthetic refinement and its precise declaration of the idea the sculptor desired to portray.

This two-thirds life-size nude was designed about 1920 and its original study, cast in bronze, is in the Collection of F. H. LaGuardia. The marble itself is in the Collection of R. M. Blair of Richmond, Virginia, and another marble copy is in the sculptor's possession. It was awarded the Elizabeth A. Watrous Gold Medal and the Irving T. Bush Prize of \$1,000.00 at the Annual Exhibition of the Grand Central Art Galleries in New York in 1929.

CHAPTER VI

Mothers' War Memorial, Albany — Christopher Columbus Monument — Faun Playing with Squirrel — Lunette, Fidelity-Philadelphia Trust Company — Night and Day (Clock), Fidelity-Philadelphia Trust Company — Thomas Jefferson Portrait Bust — James Monroe Portrait Bust — Joy of Life (Young Faun) — James Monroe Statue — Statue of Henry Watkins Allen

From 1923 to 1932, Attilio's work consisted almost exclusively of public monuments. This chapter will consider only his more important work.

Attilio Piccirilli caught the immortal spirit and beauty of peace in the **MOTHERS' WAR MEMORIAL**, dedicated in 1923 in Albany, N. Y. No one has surpassed the majestic beauty of this quiet, impressive figure of **PEACE** (Plates 63, 91), which stands guard with benevolent muteness over the grave of fallen heroes. Nothing simpler than this expression of serene nobility has ever emerged from marble. Her moral strength, shown with equanimity and forbearance through the medium of a simple design, appeals with peculiar force to the Italian temperament of the sculptor.

Sorrow is expressed by the bowed head and aristocratic attitude of the figure standing at attention with the tranquility of a sentinel of peace. She symbolizes the exalted spirit of peace

and is endowed with the *grandeur* of bearing compatible with the thought expressed. Its nobility is further heightened by restrained emotion and sentimentality, and the mood portrayed is readily communicable to the spectator who instinctively experiences a feeling of spiritual exhilaration embodied within the sculptural form.

A large sword decorated with olive leaves is held in her left hand together with the palm-branch of victory. Her finely wrought features emerge from the soft, gray shadows of the enveloping mantle which covers her head and falls gracefully over her shoulders. With upraised hand she gently holds the mantle away from her face. The play of light produces interesting shadows which hover about the face in an unusual dramatic effect.

The *MOTHERS' WAR MEMORIAL* is indeed an impressive conception of this theme and the sculptor's intuitive capacity to express the soul and inner life of a given subject intrigues the imagination.

Friends of the Paul Hoffman Junior High School in New York City, of which Angelo Patri is Principal, presented a marble bust of *CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS* to the school in 1925. It is heroic in size and stands on a simple pedestal in the school garden. Its appeal is due largely to its broad concept and simple design, but there is too much interest in pictorial detail. This portrait of *COLUMBUS* is perhaps the least successful of all Attilio's magnificent portraits.

During the time Attilio was at work on his portrait of Columbus, he was invited by Angelo Patri to spend a brief vacation at the Patri country estate in the Adirondack Mountains. He enjoyed the luxury of the beautiful country with its rejuven-

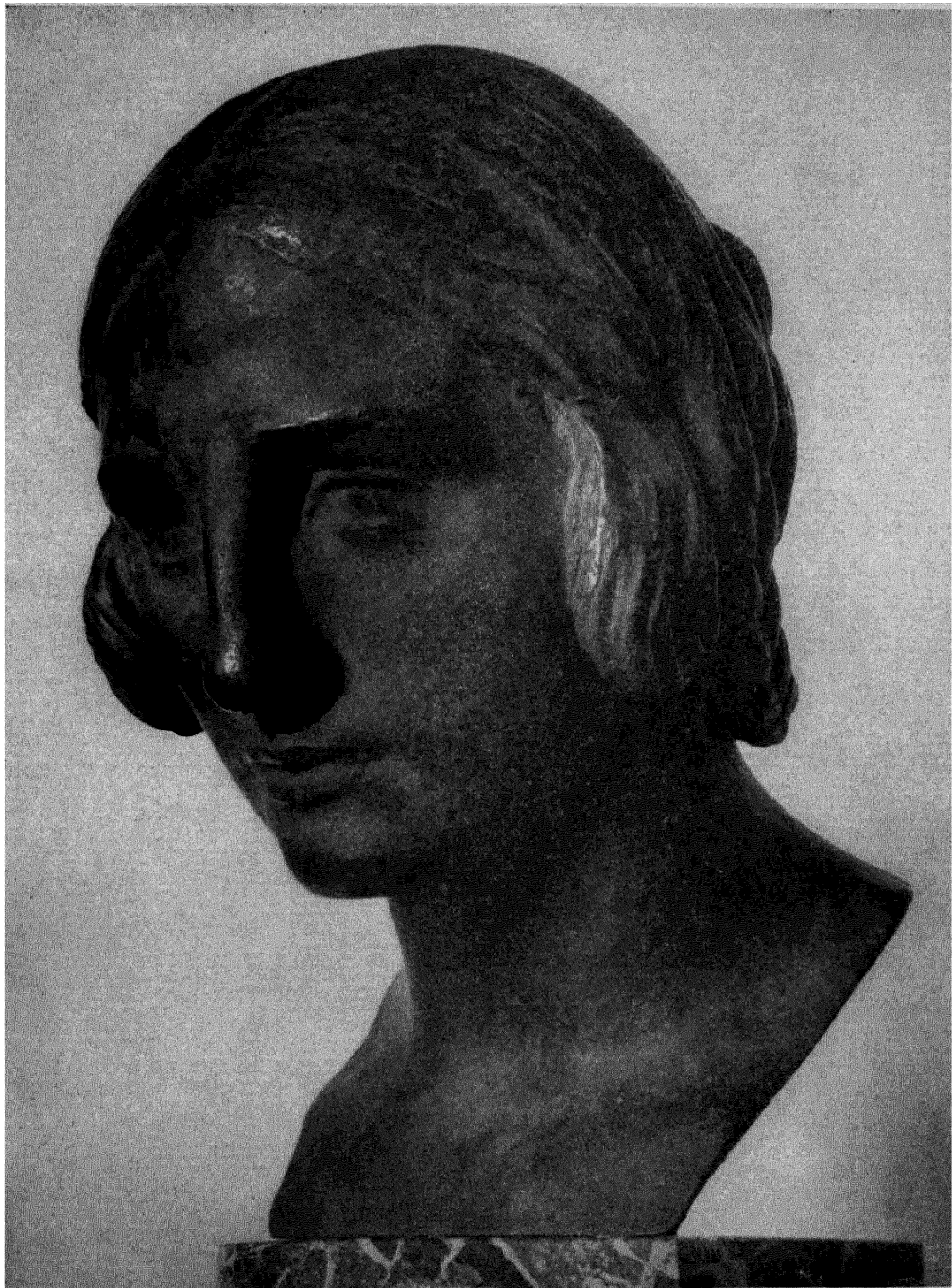


PLATE 33

Metropolitan Museum of Art, N. Y.

HEAD OF A WOMAN



PLATE 34

The Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, Brooklyn, N. Y.

INDIAN LAWGIVER

[205]

ating fresh air so much that he never remembers such complete relaxation. But it was not to last very long, for one day he discovered that a patch of the well-kept grounds shaded with their tall trees could be made even more attractive by the addition of an appropriate garden-piece. His leisure time was now spent thinking of ideas for a piece of statuary to enhance the beauty of the landscape. Before his stay had terminated, he had modeled a life-size FAUN PLAYING WITH A SQUIRREL (Plate 64) which was cast in cement and set upon a rustic base of field stones. It is a delightful piece of sculpture which blends beautifully with its surroundings. The casually reclined faun is shown playing with a friendly squirrel which is undoubtedly begging for something to eat. Its whimsical mood, while lazily trifling with the little animal, is well-nigh contagious and almost as relaxing as nature can be. This half-human deity, capriciously enjoying its natural habitat, is an inseparable part of its environment.

A marble lunette (Plate 65) carved in 1927 decorates the lobby of the Fidelity-Philadelphia Trust Company Building. It typifies PROTECTION and tells its story with clarity. A matronly woman of benign countenance is shown with outstretched arms offering protection to a young mother fondling her new-born infant. Another young woman is affectionately holding her young boy as they both look to the central figure for the protection she offers against life's misfortunes and for the security of her youngster. Another child plays the violin symbolizing MUSIC; still another represents ART; and a third child, resting against the central figure, typifies LITERATURE. All these cultural pursuits are made possible by the protection offered by the seated draped figure which dominates the whole design. This figure holds the center of attention through the linear structure of the bas-relief

and because all figures are focused upon her. Agreement of the figures to the circular shape of the lunette is very successful. The figures are pleasingly spaced and their variation is a safeguard against monotony.

Another sculptural feature of the interior of this building is a monumental clock flanked by a life-size figure on each side representing NIGHT and DAY. A richly colored stained-glass window illustrating incidents in the history of Philadelphia, forms the background for Attilio's marble carving.

A male figure is seated on one side of the clock and a female on the other — both figures are arranged in much the same way and both are partly draped with the upper part of their bodies exposed. Their extended hands meet below the center of the clock and overlap each other — this physical gesture signifies Eternity. The female figure represents NIGHT and is shown with closed eyes, while the figure of DAY is portrayed with open eyes. They are definitely sculpturesque in quality and classic in spirit and design. All in all, it is a good piece of traditional sculpture.

In the summer of 1930, Governor Jno. Garland Pollard of the Commonwealth of Virginia visited Ash Lawn, the home of James Monroe at Charlottesville, Virginia. To friends gathered there, he explained the purpose of the statute adopted that spring by the General Assembly of Virginia officially authorizing organizations, societies, or persons to place portrait busts of white marble in the niches of the rotunda of the capitol building of illustrious Virginians — Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, William Henry Harrison, John Tyler, Zachary Taylor and Woodrow Wilson — who had risen to the Presidency of the United States.

When Thomas Jefferson designed the capitol building for

the colony of Virginia, he provided the rotunda apparently in anticipation of that purpose. In the center of the rotunda stood the inimitable statue of George Washington by the sculptor Jean Antoine Houdon (1741-1828), chosen for the purpose by Thomas Jefferson when he was American ambassador to France. Jefferson previously had tried to persuade Antonio Canova (1757-1822), the great Italian sculptor, to accept this historic commission but Canova pleaded that his age prevented his risking a voyage across the vast Atlantic. Thereupon Jefferson chose Houdon whose fame had already spread throughout the world.

Those who were gathered around Governor Pollard—Jay Winston Johns, Reverend N. Addison Baker, Theodore Fred Kuper, Mrs. Thomas W. Murrell, and Mrs. Virginia Taylor—expressed enthusiastic approval of his plan. The Governor then asked Mr. Kuper, for many years legal secretary of the Board of Education of the City of New York and at the time National Director of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, whether he could be instrumental in obtaining a portrait bust of Jefferson. Mr. Kuper reminded the Governor that there were many Americans of French descent in New York who would consider it a privilege to provide the Jefferson bust. During his stay in Paris as American ambassador, Jefferson had made many friends and the memory of this likable American remained prominent in the minds of the French people, so it is not surprising that this magnanimous offer was soon made by a French Society in New York. With this auspicious start, it was not long before donations were received from descendents and friends for most of the other portrait busts of Virginia-born Presidents of the United States.

Governor Pollard then turned to Mr. Johns—the host of the occasion who had recently acquired Ash Lawn for the pur-

pose of preserving it as a national shrine in honor of James Monroe, its original owner — who graciously accepted the chairmanship of a committee to procure a bust of James Monroe.

In view of the fact that the Washington statue in the rotunda of the capitol building was designed by Houdon, and since Houdon had also designed a bust of Thomas Jefferson, Mr. Kuper felt that a replica of the Houdon bust would be most appropriate and a search began for such a replica. The only copies known to exist at the time were the portraits in the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, and in the New York Historical Society. Dr. Fiske Kimball, Director of the Pennsylvania Museum of Art, suggested that Mr. Kuper visit the Piccirilli Studio to see if perchance a replica of the Houdon bust of Jefferson might be found there.

Mr. Johns arrived in New York from Virginia the day Mr. Kuper planned to go to the Piccirilli Studio. When Mr. Kuper explained where he was going, Mr. Johns laughingly suggested, "I'll go along. Perhaps we will also find a bust of James Monroe." When the two arrived at the workshop, they found three of the Piccirilli brothers working on hugh marbles. One of the brothers met the inquiring pair, but "Alas," he told them they did not have a bust of Jefferson.

Mr. Kuper then inquired, "Perhaps you have one of James Monroe?" "No, no statue of Monroe either," the sculptor replied, then added as an afterthought, "only a large one." Both men quickly exclaimed, "Where is it? Let us see it."

They were politely escorted through several exhibition rooms and finally into a large hall filled with various types of statuary hidden beneath blankets of dust. A huge figure, completely forgotten in the obscurity of the infrequently visited hall,

stood in one of the corners covered with tarpaulins and burlap. Several assistants were quickly summoned to unwrap the twelve-foot statue. With the improvised wrappings finally removed there emerged in majestic splendor before the two breathless gentlemen an heroic statue of Monroe. When the brothers heard the exclamations of surprise and joy, they immediately sent an emissary to find Attilio. Apparently Attilio showed no interest in the visitors and was about to leave the studio when the messenger beckoned him to return.

Messrs. Johns and Kuper were introduced to Attilio, showering him with praise and queries regarding the origin and history of this wonderful work of art and why it stood there so neglected in a solitary corner. Mr. Kuper waxed warm with much enthusiasm, exclaiming that the statue did not belong to the studio but in the choicest spot of the hallowed ground at Ash Lawn, Virginia, Monroe's home and native state. "The state and the nation," continued Mr. Kuper, "should dedicate that statue in the presence of the Governor and descendants of Monroe with patriots from all parts of the country in attendance." The enthusiasm of the two gentlemen was boundless. Attilio stood back for a moment to watch them while they became lost in genuine admiration. He began to recall the anguish and disappointment this statue had caused him many years ago. "An artist," he repeatedly says, "creates a work of art to bring enjoyment and happiness to the lives of men." Now, quite suddenly and unexpectedly, his statue was being admired and coveted by these two men and the experience thrilled him deeply. Here, then, was all an artist could hope for his art — that it be admired and appreciated.

At this point there was a pause and the three men retired to the studio kitchen where they sat around a marble-top table at

which Attilio poured his wine while he told of the illustrious Americans of his day, including three Presidents, who had been his guests at that same table. In that atmosphere, Attilio unfolded the story of the statue to the admiring gentlemen.

The sculptor began recounting an interesting episode of a political embroglio in South America at the close of the Nineteenth Century. For years intermittent disputes occurred between the Republic of Venezuela and British Guiana over the boundary between these two territories. In April, 1895, the issue came to a sudden climax with the arrest of two inspectors of the British Guiana police by Venezuelan authorities. The police inspectors were released in due course, but a report of the incident, submitted to British officials, renewed hostilities.

Upon appeal of the Venezuelan Minister to Washington, President Grover Cleveland took up the cause of the South American Republic to vindicate the principles so eloquently set forth in the Monroe Doctrine. President Cleveland sent a message to Congress which in substance stated that any attempt on the part of the British Government to enforce claims upon Venezuela without resort to arbitration would be considered as *casus belli* by the United States.

In 1897, diplomatic relations between the Republic of Venezuela and Great Britain were resumed and the boundary dispute was peacefully arbitrated to the satisfaction of both countries.

That same year, General Joaquin Crespo, President of Venezuela, sent his son to New York to commission Piccirilli to make a huge statue of James Monroe to be erected in the Venezuelan Capital at Caracas. This gesture was intended to show the gratitude of the Venezuelan people in recognition of the fact that

the application of the Monroe Doctrine had preserved the independence of Venezuela.

Ignazio Andrade became President of Venezuela in 1898, succeeding General Crespo, but a revolt against his regime was initiated soon after and the insurrection was subsequently crushed by General Crespo commanding the government troops. In one of the final skirmishes of the revolutionary movement both General Crespo and his son were slain.

Meanwhile, Attilio had completed the Monroe monument at an enormous expense to himself. Negotiations with a responsible Venezuelan Government were impossible as the government changed too frequently by revolution. With every hope of erecting the monument completely gone, the sculptor had the huge statue wrapped up and stored away.

When the excitement of the discovery of the Monroe statue abated, Mr. Kuper asked the sculptor whether he would accept a commission to make a portrait bust of Thomas Jefferson for the rotunda of the State Capitol Building in Virginia. Attilio expressed his willingness to undertake the commission not only as an artist, he explained, but also as an ardent admirer of Jefferson. He then related his experiences in helping repair the buildings of the University of Virginia after the fire of 1895 which destroyed some of the buildings designed by Thomas Jefferson. Sanford White, famous American architect, was commissioned by the University of Virginia to supervise the reconstruction and the Piccirilli Studio was commissioned to restore the beautiful sculptural decorations.

Although the failure of the contractors to repay the money the Piccirilli Studio had invested in the marble to restore

the buildings of the University brought about the bankruptcy of the family, Attilio's reverence for Jefferson did not diminish.

Attilio agreed to design the bust of Jefferson and soon afterwards completed several sketches of the proposed bust, submitting them to the Art Commission of Virginia for approval. At the request of the committee, he had based his work upon that of Houdon to preserve the atmosphere which the committee desired. As a lover of Jefferson, however, he studied various works regarding his life until he felt he was able to understand the true character of the man and express it in his portrait bust. Although Attilio's interpretation and conception of the Jeffersonian character and personality were remarkably true, the Virginia Art Commission promptly rejected the sketches he had prepared on the grounds that the artist was not acceptable to the Commission.

Messrs. Johns and Kuper were indignantly aghast at this action. They found a "tempest in the teapot" in Virginia. There was some plausible criticism of the sketches together with several confidential intimations to Mr. Johns that Attilio Piccirilli's work would never be welcomed and that it was not repudiated on purely aesthetic grounds. The two gentlemen went into a serious conference in view of these biased expressions in the hope of finding a solution. They both felt their Virginia friends needed some schooling in Americanism and in the democratic principles which made this country a great nation — they suspected that the mood of the day, which was critical of those born in foreign lands who were not "one hundred percent American," was actually tainting the judgment of their friends in Virginia.

Mr. Kuper unequivocally asserted that he would not tolerate any unfair criticism of the Jeffersonian bust since it would

have the approval of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation and no Art Commission was in a position to challenge that approval. Attilio, however, informed Mr. Kuper that he did not wish to complete the commission under such circumstances. The emissary pleaded with the sculptor, explaining that there was much more at stake from the standpoint of good American citizenship and the practical application of Jeffersonian ideals, and prevailed upon him to complete the portrait bust. This plea of patriotism and devotion to what Jefferson symbolized was persuasive. Graciously, Attilio agreed to consider the criticism of the Art Commission and to meet that which he found worthy in a co-operative manner. In fact, he consented to complete his model in the actual presence of the Houdon bust of Jefferson to embody something of the same spiritual atmosphere. It was an heroic condescension for an artist and, when Mr. Kuper protested that this was not necessary, Attilio replied that he was perfectly willing to pay that price as his homage to Jefferson.

When Attilio petitioned the New York Historical Society for the privilege of working close to Houdon's bust of Jefferson he was politely discouraged. If such permission were granted, the Society argued, its routine business and daily activities would be wholly disrupted. The crux of the matter was that the Society would not countenance the idea of permitting the sculptor to work in its building.

A few days later, Mr. Kuper attended a conference for officials of the New York Historical Society and discovered that Houdon's bust of Jefferson was standing unprotected in an obscure and out-of-the-way hall. He protested so vigorously that shortly thereafter the portrait bust was removed from its erstwhile humble location and set in a conspicuous place in the center of a

large room enclosed in a protective glass. The seldom-visited location of Houdon's Jefferson in the Society's building refuted the representations made to Attilio in dissuading him from working there. With the intervention of the energetic Mr. Kuper, who reminded the curator of the New York Historical Society that Attilio was undertaking a very important commission and that it would not look very well to have the Society's hostility publicly known, the sculptor was ultimately permitted to study the bust, but only through the protective glass case.

Very patiently, he set about his work again and completed several plaster sketches of Jefferson in his own studio and dispatched them to the Virginia Art Commission. He was not shocked to learn that his sketches were rejected again as unworthy. Attilio was provoked by the Commission's frivolous and captious attitude and decided to dismiss the difficult situation from his mind.

Several weeks after Attilio had transmitted his decision to the proper authorities, he received an unexpected call from the Secretary of the Art Commission in Virginia. With his ever-present gallantry and hospitality, the sculptor invited him to dinner, assuring him "every man has a right to his own opinion, whatever it might be." The Secretary proceeded to make several suggestions which he thought might improve the portrait bust and concluded his remarks by saying that his proposed changes would please Governor Pollard very much. Attilio listened politely until he had heard all the criticisms and then exploded, "The Governor is not the artist. I am the artist and I am not making a political statue. Your bigotry and his ignorance are too much for any man. Tell the Governor to go to hell! Good-bye!"

A few days after the Governor received Piccirilli's mes-

sage, he sent the sculptor a personal message begging him to "Please complete the commission," assuring him that his bust of Jefferson met with his approval and would be accepted. With all these unpleasanties once again forgotten, he began to work in earnest on the portrait bust.

On September 22, 1931, the portrait bust of THOMAS JEFFERSON (Plate 66) was presented to the Commonwealth of Virginia as a symbol of the affectionate esteem in which his memory is held by the people of France. John W. Davis delivered the principal address to a gathering of distinguished citizens assembled for the occasion. Attilio Piccirilli declined a personal invitation from the Governor to attend the dedication, preferring to remain at home.

Great art stems from original interpretation of subject expressed through the artist's personal experiences. Were Attilio's bust a literal transcription of Houdon's portrait of Jefferson, an aesthetic analysis would be ludicrous. An examination of this portrait, however, will show that Attilio contributed something aesthetically fine and spiritually true to this subject.

The portrait of this great American typifies and embodies the man Jefferson. His inner being is strongly felt in this sculptural presentation and his personality is descriptively characterized and easy to understand. No one could question the honesty, integrity, and benign qualities so expressively solidified in the bust. Alert, deeply-set eyes reveal a profound intellect and a shrewd, penetrating insight into the character of men. A strong, protruding chin and closely-knit lips show determination and the courage to think logically with conviction and independence. The intent expression of the face with its high forehead reveals his inventive genius and searching curiosity. Fearlessly, his head is held high

with dignified bearing. All these qualities, marking him as a natural leader of men, are simply stated in this portrayal of the Jeffersonian character. One need only study Attilio's statement in stone to understand the amazing personality of this accomplished lawyer, statesman, diplomat, writer and architect.

To convey a greater feeling of reality to the observer, the sculptor appropriately designed the bust to include the shoulders and all of Jefferson's body down to the waist. Thus the portrait becomes more satisfying and convincing as a representation of an individual, and the suggestion of life and reality more plausible.

Attilio's portrait busts are unexcelled in their illustration of personality and character and the external, physical structure is always a clear manifestation of the person's spiritual and subjective being. His skill in portraiture, as already seen, was demonstrated at an early age. Improvements have been wrought with time, however, and together with them he developed an intuitive understanding of human nature which is almost incredible in its expression of reality.

The original plaster study of this portrait, a gift from the sculptor, was placed in the home of Thomas Jefferson at Monticello. Another bronze replica was presented by Mark Eisner to Queens College, New York, at the dedication of Thomas Jefferson Hall in 1939. This portrait bust of Jefferson has long been regarded as the official portrait of the Third President of the United States.

A parallel campaign was conducted by Mr. Johns who had pledged to procure a portrait bust of James Monroe. Before beginning negotiations with any one sculptor, Mr. Johns went directly to Governor Pollard with a request that he be given the names of those sculptors who would be acceptable to the Art

Commission. Sometime later, the Art Commission advised Mr. Johns that it would be pleased to have the Monroe bust designed by either James Earle Fraser, Hermon Atkins MacNeil or Herbert Adams, regarded as sterling American sculptors.

Arrangements to interview the three sculptors were immediately made. Fraser, the first sculptor approached, declined the commission but in declining suggested Attilio Piccirilli whose indisputable competence as an artist he praised. MacNeil, the next artist of the Art Commission's choice, also declined and, like Fraser, asked that Piccirilli be considered. Adams similarly rejected the commission and voluntarily proposed Piccirilli's name.

With three laudatory recommendations written by the three well-known sculptors, Mr. Johns reported to Governor Pollard with his almost unbelievable information. How can the commission be withheld from Mr. Piccirilli, inquired Mr. Johns, when he was the unanimous nominee of all three sculptors of whom the Art Commission thought highly enough to recommend for the purpose? Governor Pollard supported the recommendation made by the sculptors and a few days later Attilio was given the commission for the James Monroe bust, notwithstanding the Art Commission's antagonistic position.

Several months after the dedication of the Thomas Jefferson bust, similar exercises were arranged for the unveiling of the JAMES MONROE portrait (Plate 67). Andrew W. Montague, former Governor of Virginia, was chosen as speaker of the day. Many illustrious visitors attended the dedication of the portrait bust in November, 1931, in the State Capitol Building. An invitation to be present at the ceremonies was again extended to the sculptor and this time accepted. He did not anticipate too much

hospitality, however, so he thought it best to check his overnight bag at the railroad station.

Piccirilli was deeply impressed by the solemnity of the dedicatory program and thrilled to see his portraits of two famous American Presidents side by side in the rotunda of the building. Aesthetically, the Monroe bust embodies the same artistic quality and psychological revelation of the Jefferson portrait. Monroe's portrait is a simple declarative statement, forceful in its interpretation of the character and true to the man's nature. Governor Pollard's dream of acquiring for the rotunda of the State Capitol Building the portrait busts of Virginians who had ascended to the Presidency of the United States was being slowly realized.

With the official ceremonies over, Piccirilli was leaving the building unnoticed when he was suddenly approached by the Governor and invited to the Executive Mansion where a reception had been arranged for honored guests. Several times during the reception Governor Pollard asked the sculptor to stay for dinner with his family, but he politely refused. As the guests began to depart, Piccirilli noticed a woman being wheeled into the room in an invalid's chair. She was the First Lady of the Commonwealth of Virginia and anxious to meet the sculptor. Long one of his ardent admirers, her first words to Piccirilli were offered in apology for the ignorance of the members of the Art Commission. Mrs. Pollard, a gentle and cultured lady, said, "Excuse them for they do not read," referring to the ignorance of the Art Commission's membership regarding the goings-on in the art world. Piccirilli saw the signs of suffering clearly in her deeply-set eyes—she had been an invalid for many years. When she begged him to stay for dinner, he accepted without hesitancy, but not before telling her that he had checked his clothes at the railroad station.

Swiftly, she opened the palm of her hand and requested his check — a valet was sent to the station to retrieve the overnight bag.

During the course of the evening's dinner, the sculptor learned that it was traditional for a Governor's wife to leave the State a gift at the expiration of her husband's term of office. Mrs. Pollard, long afflicted with arthritis, told Piccirilli regretfully that she could not continue this tradition as her long illness had been too great a drain on her husband's finances. With tears of regret welling in her eyes, she related how she had hoped at one time to purchase one of his beautiful statues for the State of Virginia. Piccirilli was so deeply touched by this sincere expression, that he carried with him to New York a vivid picture of the unhappy but brave Mrs. Pollard. Her sorrow troubled him.

When he returned to his studio his first task was to supervise the crating of several statues which were to be shown in an out-of-town exhibition. One of the statues was that of the YOUNG FAUN (Plate 9), a handsome figure of a young boy which had already been crated and properly addressed. It stood in the great central studio awaiting the arrival of the express company. As he was making a final inspection of the crating, the vision of Mrs. Pollard seated helplessly in her chair suddenly appeared to him. He paused for a moment and recalled the sincerely expressed wish of that courageous lady who had no time to grieve over her own miserable existence, but rather hoped that she, too, might continue unbroken the old Virginian tradition of her forebears.

The impelling force within the artist to help others was irresistible. At any cost, he thought, this deserving lady must be made happy, especially since it was within his power to bring her the happiness she sought. He had made his decision. He had the statue uncrated and telephoned Mr. Kuper to come down to his

studio as quickly as possible. After relating his experience regarding Mrs. Pollard, he led Mr. Kuper by the hand into the central studio and pointing to the youthful nude said, "If I were certain that the Governor and Mrs. Pollard would accept this gift, it would make me so happy to give that wonderful lady this statue that she might place it in the garden of the Executive Mansion." Mr. Kuper remonstrated that while his sentiment was superb, he could ill afford to give away a statue unquestionably worth several thousand dollars. Piccirilli replied that material things are really unimportant in life. "They acquire significance only when their beauty can bring happiness and contentment. This statue is just a trifle," continued the sculptor, "compared with the joy I will have if I were sure that it would bring a little ray of sunshine to the life of this woman who has suffered so much and so graciously."

Mr. Kuper was prevailed upon to accept the ambassadorship for the occasion. He wrote to Governor Pollard confidentially about the thought Piccirilli had expressed and requested the Governor to advise him frankly whether the gift would be welcome. Governor Pollard's reply was speedy and full of sincere appreciation and gratitude.

A few days later, the Governor invited the sculptor to the Executive Mansion in Richmond. On his arrival he learned that Mrs. Pollard's health had grown considerably worse and that she was confined to her chamber. Thrilled beyond words by the artist's delightful gift, she sent word to him at once, imploring him to visit her. She insisted on leaving her sick-bed when Piccirilli arrived to look out from the window overlooking the beautifully cultivated lawns of the mansion where she had, several years previously, personally supervised the planting of her favorite fir



PLATE 35

The Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, Brooklyn, N. Y.

INDIAN LITERATURE

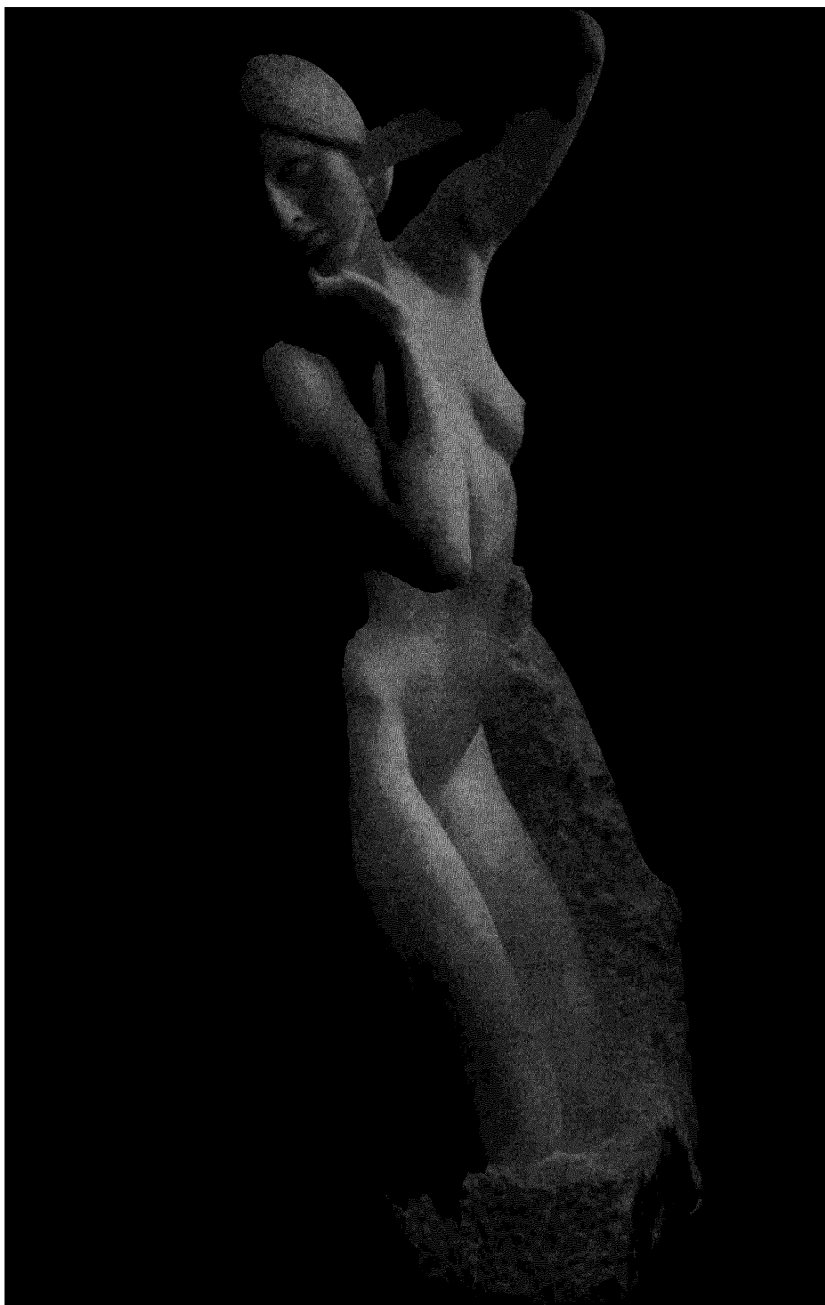


PLATE 36

Collection of the Sculptor

A SOUL

[225]

trees. Supporting herself on the sculptor's arm, she indicated to several men from her window where she wanted the statue placed. Her dream was finally fulfilled. The following day, Mrs. Pol-lard died.

This is one incident among a score of others which reveals the generosity, thoughtfulness and altruism of the sculptor. His kindness has always been a source of happiness to the less fortunate and these admirable qualities have endeared him to all his friends and acquaintances.

The bronze figure of the young boy, JOY OF LIFE (Plate 9), really represents a youthful faun. It was originally carved in marble and is one of the artist's early sculptures. In this figure he shows a serious interest in the animation of adolescents, a study which had always fascinated him. It was carved in 1898 and the original marble was destroyed by fire in 1920 when the Vanderbilt Gallery of The Architectural League of New York burned.

Completely unaware of its surroundings, the youthful faun is happily concerned with its own merriment. The seemingly carefree arrangement of the figure is intended to reinforce the expression of gaiety and mirth. This casual disposition of the body shows careful planning and helps explain the thought the artist wished to record. The dimple-cheeked boy stands easily on both feet with his right hip thrown out awkwardly to one side, while musingly he passes his fingers through a mass of roughly hewn, curled hair. There are no semi-human characteristics of such mythological deities, such as goats' feet, pointed ears, and perhaps horns sprouting from their foreheads.

Typical of adolescence is the lean, almost scrawny structure of the body. Slightly awkward in bodily attitude yet graceful in contour and movement, the artist summarizes the salient

physical characteristics of young boys. It is apparent that the sculptor's chief interest was the rendition and interpretation of a young boy possessing all the refreshing attributes of youth. It is easy to understand why Mrs. Pollard was so happy to receive this delightful statue.

For many months following the dedication of the James Monroe bust in Richmond, Piccirilli had been thinking of expressing in some tangible way his appreciation for the many kindnesses and honors bestowed upon him by the State of Virginia. What form this expression of gratitude was to take he did not know. One day he chanced to pass through a part of the studio he seldom visited and was attracted by the grotesque attire, consisting of burlap and tarpaulin, protecting the huge statue of James Monroe. Perhaps this historic monument might be a fitting tribute of his gratitude if accepted by the State of Virginia as a gift from the artist! The thought of this statue standing idly in obscurity had always been a source of unhappiness.

Piccirilli again solicited the services of the gracious Mr. Kuper and arrangements were soon made to present the statue to Virginia. After a conference with Mr. Johns, who was summoned from Virginia, it was agreed to place the monument permanently on the beautifully landscaped grounds of Ash Lawn, Monroe's former residence. Piccirilli was invited to Ash Lawn to choose the most favorable site for the monument. He chose a spot commanding a view of the famous boxwood gardens from which Monticello could be seen on the crest of a hill in the distance. As a pleasing contrast to the neglect this statue had suffered during the three decades of dust gathering in the sculptor's studio, it was now acclaimed by citizens and officialdom alike.

Thirty Governors attending a conference in Richmond

witnessed the unveiling of the James Monroe statue at Ash Lawn on April 25, 1932, near Charlottesville, Virginia. Mrs. Rose Governor Hoes, the great, great grand-daughter of James Monroe, and her son, together with other descendents of the Monroe family, gathered around the statue for the dedication ceremonies. Claude G. Bowers, historian, author, journalist and diplomat, was the speaker of the day. His address was noted in the newspapers throughout the land and was reproduced in full in the Congressional Record. In his address, Claude Bowers paid tribute to Attilio Piccirilli in these words:

“Here we raise a beautiful monument with a romantic history of its own to the glory of James Monroe. When the sculptor was still young and ardent in his art, he was commissioned by Venezuela to make it for her capital, as a visible expression of her appreciation of Monroe. Into the moulding of the marble went all the youthful ardor of the artist; and then came the British challenge to the Doctrine of Monroe in the Venezuelan crisis.

“That incident, that so nearly led to war, was closed with victory for the policy of Monroe, but the delicacy of the situation would have made the unveiling of the statue then seem to England as the salting of a sore.

“And so the years have passed, and this exquisite bit of statuary has been treasured in the studio of the sculptor, who came to love it with the passing of the years, as the favorite of his youth.”

Standing more than twelve feet in height (Plate 68), this imposing figure of the Fifth President of the United States rises magnificently on its circular base of white marble resplendently situated on the crown of a hill at Ash Lawn. In his glorification of the American hero, Attilio creates a powerful figure impreg-

nated with life and vitality. The representation is that of a man of unfaltering convictions, of uninhibited resolution, and of unswerving loyalty to his country and his ideals. His attitude is one of exhortation rather than command, and his expression is strikingly impressive for its dignity and naturalness.

The organization of the figure, with outstretched, gesturing arm, is precise and harmonious. Monroe is shown in debate with a manuscript in one hand, calmly composed with self-assurance and confidence. His destiny was to preserve the freedom and liberty of nations and the dignity of man, and the artist shows that he was capable of comprehending its significance and circumstance. His intent seriousness and the sobriety of his bearing adapt themselves to restraint in sculpture.

Immediately following the unveiling, luncheon was served in the residence of Mr. and Mrs Jay Winston Johns, present owners and rehabilitators of Ash Lawn. A reception given by the Board of Governors of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation was later held for the distinguished visitors and guests at Monticello, Jefferson's former home. After the visit to Monticello, the entire party drove through Charlottesville to the University of Virginia where it was welcomed by the faculty.

A formal dinner in honor of Piccirilli was given that evening in the Executive Mansion by Governor Pollard. A warm and sincere friendship between Governor Pollard and Piccirilli replaced the bitterness precipitated by the hostile action of the Art Commission. Piccirilli came to be regarded in Virginia as an adopted son of the native state of Jefferson and Monroe.

It should be mentioned here that during the protracted controversy with the Virginian Art Commission, Attilio was commissioned to make another monument of a state hero.

A marble statue of HENRY WATKINS ALLEN (1820-1866), lawyer, brigadier-general, statesman and Civil War Governor of Louisiana, stands in the rotunda of the State Capitol Building in Baton Rouge and was commissioned in 1931 (Plate 69). This handsome Southerner, aristocratic in appearance and well over six feet in height, seems to be addressing the state legislature. Energetic and resolute in manner, this cultivated man of character appears to possess all the dignity and social amenities of a gentleman.

His right hand is clenched with unwavering determination as if he were attempting to emphasize an important point. In his other hand he holds several documents. A long coat in the fashion of the day is left open, revealing a high vest with lapels; a large bow-tie is tied neatly around his high collar. Although the figure's attire is dated, it is not in the least displeasing. This may be due to its picturesqueness and to the definite sculptural quality of the statue. Both arms are kept close to the body for better mass-composition.

The well-groomed features with nicely combed hair and long, well-kept mustache, indicate a man of breeding and his keen, sharp eyes disclose his prudence. All the attributes of personality have been noted with conscious simplicity but not without force. Atilio did not begin this work until he had familiarized himself with available literature throwing light upon the man's personality, character and attainments to insure a true notation of this colorful figure.

The sculpture considered thus far shows that Piccirilli's art has an imprint of originality, distinctly personal in concept and organization. His art shows complete disassociation from any

venerated doctrine, dogma of style or gospel of art. Iconographically, his art is unlike that of any other sculptor. Its superiority can best be judged by comparing Piccirilli's sculpture with the entire production of American sculpture conceived in the first three decades since 1900.

CHAPTER VII

The Wave — Torso — Marchita — The Aesthetics of Clay Modeling and Direct Stone Carving — Study of a Woman — Piccirilli's Preference for the Seated Female Nude — Hygeia and Aesculapius, Pediment, Administration Building, Saratoga Springs, N. Y. — Eternal Youth, Rockefeller Center — Youth Leading Industry, Rockefeller Center — Joy of Life, Rockefeller Center — Present-Day Postman — Positive and Negative Elements in Sculpture — Statue of Richard Ellis — Laughing Boy and Goat — Bas-relief, Whitman, Massachusetts — Policemen's Memorial Monument — Marconi Memorial Monument — Mayor Louis F. Edwards — Alfred Rhett du Pont, Jr.

The last phase of Attilio's style is bound by the period between 1932 and 1942. During this productive period he created some of his most interesting sculptures. His style, ever so simple, is marked by a distinct yet abstract quality which serves to strengthen his sculptural compositions and reinforce the beauty of the human body. These abstract and representative elements are harmoniously welded together and recorded with infinite variation. Their function is to implement one another in the interest of a cumulative aesthetic effect.

The objectification of rhythm was attempted and successfully achieved in the figure of THE WAVE (Plates 70, 71), carved in 1931. It is a daring undertaking, fraught with uncer-

tainties and misgivings but the sculptor shows he had the genius to resolve his problem with satisfying effectiveness. The graceful nude, inscribed in a sweeping curve, seems to have reached the crest of its upward surge, when its action is momentarily stopped. The sculptor tells his story in this fleeting moment, an instant before the nude begins its descent.

It is suggestive of the recurring rise-and-fall undulation of water waves, expressing a beautiful sense of that rhythm. Whether the nude is seen from the front or back, its dynamic, curvilinear motion activates the whole body, engaging the attention of the spectator at the same time. Its beauty is based upon the most sensitive contiguity of contours which define the formal masses of the body. *THE WAVE* aroused considerable comment when first exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1932.

The female nude surmounts a wedge-shaped base which forms an important counterpart of the design. The principal rhythm of the figure is supported by secondary, auxiliary curves consisting of the thighs, left arm and head. The dominant curve begins with the left thigh, moving swiftly through the torso, and terminates at the head. Her body is neither tenuous nor heavy, but sufficiently supple to express vividly the abstract idea of rhythm.

In the figure of *THE WAVE*, Attilio has endeavored to externalize an idea and solidify motion. This union of abstract elements is given expression through the medium of the human body without sacrificing the beauty of its sculptural form.

Attilio has imputed a fine sense of reality to the impressive, humanistically inspired torso of a woman (Plate 72), completed in 1933. Though headless and without limbs, it embodies a moving feeling of life. Large, simply carved masses, stripped of every



PLATE 37

Collection of the Sculptor

A SOUL

[235]



PLATE 38

Metropolitan Museum of Art, N. Y.

FRAGELINA

[237]



PLATE 30

Collection of the Sculptor

FRAGELINA

[239]



PLATE 40

Collection of the Sculptor

MARIA

[241]

detail, reveal its strong, sturdy construction. The sculptor has clothed this fragment with a simplicity which sets it immediately apart from classical and Renaissance prototypes.

The original MARCHITA (Plate 73), posed for by a Mexican girl, was cut directly in plaster in 1926, and shown at the Sesquicentennial International Exposition in Philadelphia the same year. Attilio carved the over life-size head directly in marble sometime between 1926-1933, as an experiment.

Attilio does not customarily carve his statues directly in marble without preliminary sketches in clay, later casting them in plaster. From these plaster studies, he carves his figures either by the direct method or after "pointing" them.

There has been considerable discussion in the last decade regarding the propriety of making clay or plaster models before carving them in a more permanent material. Some writers contend that this approach implies that a sculptor's conception of three-dimensional form is not precise enough to warrant direct carving; that he is too dependent upon his model which subconsciously induces him to imprint its clay characteristics upon his marble; and that this rigid discipline stifles his creative instincts, undermining his confidence and judgment. Reasons upholding these contentions are generally confusing, contradictory and unsupported. One writer even suggests that clay modeling is not sculpture at all, but a form of painting, and attributes this idea to Michelangelo. (Vidi, R. H. Wilenski, *The Meaning of Modern Sculpture*. New York, 1935, pp. 94, 101.).

The last statement implies one truth, namely, that modeling is unlike carving. This can be amply supported. But the theory that the resistance which marble offers the chisel in the process of carving contributes to the creative ideas of the sculptor

is mere speculation not confirmed by scientific data. Even if this theory were psychologically established, it would apply whether a carver uses a model or not. The implication here seems to be that in the absence of a model the sculptor enjoys greater freedom of expression.

If tactile sensations, arising from stone carving, arouse creative ideas, then clay modeling would be far more provocative and stimulating as the artist's sense of touch is directly involved. Moreover, if the modeler then proceeds to carve his own model he would enjoy the added experience attributed only to carving. Inasmuch as the modeler's contact with clay is more personal and real — clay modeling depends upon the manipulation of the hands and fingers — then, what is claimed for the stone carver would apply with greater force to the clay modeler.

Making a plaster model to reduce possible miscalculations in carving expensive blocks of marble is not a sign of mediocrity or inferior ability, providing the entire process is completed by the sculptor himself. A preliminary study is often expedient and desirable and generally represents what the creator desires and intends. No sculptor can claim today that all his productions have been executed without the use and necessity of making "working" sketches.

Sketches of this kind are comparable to the studies made by painters in various media before painting in fresco, tempera, oils and so forth. The architect makes miniature models of his buildings in clay or plaster to study the effectiveness and relationship of masses. The fresco painter enlarges his small-scale sketches mechanically upon a wall before he undertakes its painting. Why should this practice be acceptable and permissible in painting and architecture and not in sculpture? The moral issue

is the same and aesthetic considerations remain unchanged. Is an artist less of a sculptor because he models and carves? Those who question this practice, whether a sculptor carves directly or not, are indulging in false issues without aesthetic significance.

The aesthetic value of a work of art is determined by its end result and not by an analysis of the technical processes used to create it. A work of art is judged basically upon the merit of its design and composition, and how it was constructed has no real meaning in art, excepting architecture. If the sculptor fulfills the necessary requisites of design, exploring and exploiting the intrinsic beauty of his medium, he need not concern himself with technical considerations which, at best, are remotely related to the aesthetic responses of his final creation.

The trend in sculpture today is for the sculptor to do his own carving from the inception of a statue to the finished work. This is merely a trend, however, not general practice, even today. Whether a sculptor carves directly without a model, or whether he first "points" his marble with a model, seems to make little difference in the final result, assuming always that the sculptor does all his own work.

It has already been mentioned, in Chapter II, that some sculptors insist on "finishing" their marbles once they have been whittled down to the proper form and dimension by the stone cutter. Few sculptors voluntarily acknowledge their inability to carve, and rarely admit that their models are entrusted to others for completion. The practice of "finishing" a marble carved by someone else is an attempt to camouflage a lack of ability and confidence. A statue properly "pointed" by a capable artist leaves little for the sculptor to finish. Rubbing the surface of a statue

with pumice, scraping it here and there with a rasp, or treating the marble with acid, can hardly be called carving or "finishing."

"Pointing" is a method of measuring and boring holes, not one of carving which must be done by hand. It is not entirely a mechanical process but involves a specialized skill. Visualization is a vital part of the stone cutter's art, and without it he would be incapable of "pointing" and carving his marble. He must have the keen sense of fitting his mental image of the model into the block of marble, and by this superimposition of mental images he is able to determine how the model is to be carved and where to begin his "pointing." This skill is not mechanical. It is acquired by years of experience.

Some contemporary writers, who believe "pointing" is a reprehensible practice, fail to recognize a very important distinction. They do not understand the difference between the sculptor who makes his clay model, later "pointing" and carving it himself, and the sculptor whose work ends with his clay model, relying upon a skilled artisan to complete it for him in marble. In the first instance, the sculptor accepts all the risks and obligations inherent in his art and his final production is an expression of his own creative genius and ability. In the latter case, the direction followed is deplorable and should be discouraged. It shows that the sculptor's training is both inadequate and incomplete.

"Pointing" is not extrinsic to sculpture, no more so than the practice of some painters who apply their pigments directly on canvas with a palette knife instead of a brush. "Pointing" is part of every sculptor's stock-in-trade. Finally, it is the end result which is always adjudicated in a work of art.

Another unsupported argument to establish that an artist

who models before carving is not a sculptor is found in the hypothesis that he imparts the character of clay to his marble. The nature and substance of clay is far different from that of stone or marble. It is also true that clay is a medium which lends itself more easily to greater refinement and representation of detail. The fact that detail is easily achieved in one substance and not in another is sufficient evidence that clay and marble are intrinsically different. It would follow logically that the character of clay cannot be imparted to stone or marble.

Details cannot be easily translated in stone, or realized with the same facility. The coarser grain of stone resists any attempt to mutilate its character. Good sculpture should be free from adventitious detail, but it does not necessarily follow that a modeler is incapable of carving in broad planes and masses just because he also works in another medium in which finer detail is possible.

A sculptor, fully aware of the responsibilities and discipline required in carving, designs his clay model in large, general patterns of form without the encumbrances of superfluous detail. Some sculptors, particularly those of the baroque period, have carved marble with painstaking care and attention to detail. This does not necessarily imply that such over-elaborate carvings acquired the character of clay. Baroque statues may be considered artistically inferior because their insistence and emphasis on detail have destroyed the plastic, three-dimensional character of sculpture.

A fresco painter makes preliminary sketches in water color before he begins to paint his wall area. Fresco painting is a technique in which pigments are applied directly on newly-laid wet plaster which absorbs the color. Would it not be ridiculous

to say that just because the fresco painter makes his working drawings in water color that his wall paintings will not have and do not have the character of a fresco but that of a painting done on paper?

A good example illustrating how a sculptor stresses large patterns of plastic form in his preliminary clay study is Attilio's STUDY OF A WOMAN (Plates 74, 75A, 75B). This seated figure of a peasant-like, robust woman is as sculpturesque in organization and conception as stone can be fashioned without loss of identity. It fulfills every function and obligation of good sculpture, and clearly indicates that in designing this powerful nude, the sculptor was not thinking in terms of a clay study, but in terms of a hard, durable material.

This figure, one of Attilio's best nudes, portrays a physically mature woman embodying great latent vigor in her sturdily constructed frame. She is unlike his other nudes which are younger and less fleshy. A formal unity is achieved by the simple organization of large, related masses which evoke tactile sensations. A union of the restful, physical attitude with the emotive disposition of the nude enhances its overpowering simplicity. There is the slightest suggestion of pensiveness in the formless eyes, and her head, conceived in one unbroken and impressive mass, is defined by a sweeping contour which carries the observer's eye down and around the figure, unifying all its parts. Its design, both linear and plastic, is all inclusive, and its geometric compactness is felt at once. The impressive simplicity of the nude is effectively shown in the back view (Plate 75B).

The faces of Attilio's female nudes never impose themselves upon the spectator. Their severe simplicity and conventionalization would be considered almost ugly, were it not for

the fact that this intentional severity intensifies the formal design of the whole. By de-emphasizing the features of the face, in favor of a more generalized interpretation, the sculptor not only improves his design, but adds to its sculptural meaning. These impersonal, almost nondescript heads have little representational or imitative meaning. Their significance can only be realized and measured in terms of their contribution to the abstract character of design. Their function is intended to be one of design only.

This monumental nude is a well-integrated and coordinated figure, rational in its sculptural meaning and aesthetic interpretation. A bronze replica forms the principal decorative motive of the Angelo Patri Memorial in Pawling, N. Y. The marble itself was carved in 1934 and exhibited at the National Sculpture Society in 1940.

With one exception, Attilio shows a decided preference for the seated female nude as a subject for sculptural interpretation. That one exception is the FLOWER OF THE ALPS (Plate 50), and even in this instance, his nude does not assume an orthodox attitude. She is shown standing on her toes, stretching her full length across a large boulder. Her graceful attitude might suggest or be likened to the opening petal of a flower.

All his other female nudes are either reclining or seated. They include A SOUL (Plate 36), FRAGELINA (Plate 38), TWILIGHT, OR CREPUSCOLO (Plate 49), SPRING DREAM (Plate 58), YOUNG VIRGIN (Plate 62), THE WAVE (Plates 70, 71) and the female figure symbolizing ELECTRICITY in the MARCONI MEMORIAL MONUMENT (Plate 89). Attilio is consciously aware that a seated figure is subject to greater subtleties and variation of design, and, consequently, seldom veers from this chosen type, even in his public monuments.

In the ten years between 1934 and 1944, almost all of Attilio's work was commissioned. The only exception is the *LAUGHING BOY AND GOAT* (Plates 84, 85), designed in 1936.

The Saratoga Springs Authority, New York, commissioned the sculptor in 1935 to execute a pediment for the new Administration Building, designed by Joseph H. Freedlander of New York City (Plate 76).

An allegorical subject, *HYGEIA* and *AESCULAPIUS*, was chosen for the large, pedimental bas-relief. The figures are all represented in a single plane, and the illusionary effects of space are confined to the dimensions of that single plane. The sculptor has had to change the scale of the figures in order to resolve his design in the given area. Consequently, the seated figure of Aesculapius is not only larger but had to be raised on a platform for better design and to fill the central and largest part of the pediment.

It is commonly held that a sculptor's skill may be fairly judged by his ability to handle a bas-relief. (This point of view is not held by some contemporary sculptors who do not consider the bas-relief generically a part of sculpture.) The technique involved is so different from carving sculpture-in-the-round that the execution of a successful bas-relief requires unusual dexterity and imagination. A sculptor's problem is to achieve a unity of decorative elements in harmony with its architectural setting; to design figures without going counter to the two-dimensional character of the wall surface; and to confine the elements of perspective within the same architectonic formula.

In the figure of *AESCULAPIUS*, god of medicine and healing, the sculptor is able to show, within the narrow limits at his disposal, that his body appears farther back in space than his legs.



PLATE 41

Collection of the Sculptor

FURIO



PLATE 42

Collection of the National Arts Club, N. Y.

PARIS

Considering that this figure is only several inches in depth, it appears convincingly three-dimensional in its decorative frontal position. In one hand Aesculapius holds a caduceus, while his other hand rests upon a young maiden's shoulder, a device to unify the design. The upper part of his body is exposed, and the lower part is draped with geometric folds arranged in symmetrical patterns.

A young boy, holding to his lips a shallow bowl filled with water, leans against the draped figure of the young maiden. This group is completed by a naturalistically rendered rooster looking at the little boy drinking, and a hen pecking on the ground in search for food.

AESCULAPIUS' daughter, the nymph *HYGEIA*, goddess of health, stands to his left balancing the figure of the young maiden. She is bearing a gift of water, a sign of purity, in a tall water jug, while a young animal caresses her gift-bearing hand. Two sheep grazing on the ground balance the rooster and hen.

As a whole, the bas-relief shows a pleasant consolidation of naturalistic and conventionalized forms. There is a continuity from left to right, and vice versa, which unites the entire bas-relief. Folds and chitons are stylized in attractive, decorative patterns and the textures of fabrics have been varied for greater interest. The composition itself is a formal one—one side is completely balanced by corresponding figures on the other side. From the psychological point of view, the linear design of the bas-relief would have been more successful if the heads of the two lateral figures were not turned away from the central figure of *AESCULAPIUS*. These two standing figures have a tendency to draw attention away from the center where it should be logically focused and climaxed.

The figures are properly subordinated to the raking cor-

nice of the pediment. This bas-relief, which illustrates the blessings bestowed upon man and animal alike by nature and science, is a simple narration in stone. Mr. Freedlander, architect of the the building, in a letter to the author, wrote: "The pedimental bas-relief has been universally admired by the public and art professions."

In 1935, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., requested Piccirilli to execute two bas-reliefs for the main entrance of the *Palazzo d'Italia* and the International Building in Rockefeller Center in the City of New York.

Guided by the dictum that labor is life's most vital activity and man's earliest occupation, the sculptor created a huge figure thrusting a spade into the earth as the subject of his first bas-relief which he called ETERNAL YOUTH (Plate 77). Symbolically, the herculean nude purports to show (1) man's dependence upon nature and his affinity to the soil whose fruits nurture his body and mind; (2) man's development and fertility which spring from eternal labor; and the progress of civilization which is rooted in man's intellectual, cultural, spiritual and economic growth.

The massive sculptural panel is the first bas-relief cast in glass in America on such an enormous scale. It measures sixteen feet in height, eleven feet in width, and is composed of forty-five sections weighing more than seven thousand pounds. Several sections are more than six inches in thickness. It represents the largest piece of decorative sculpture ever attempted as an architectural adjunct.

A newly developed type of pyrex glass, specially treated to reduce transparency, was used. A new type of mold was constructed to cast the bas-relief — the mold had to be broken, piece

by piece, as the casting cooled and hardened. Molten glass had to be poured into the molds by hand in small quantities in such a way as to form bubbles, striations and imperfections, reducing the crystal clearness of the glass to give it the effect of fluidity and hand modeling. Its general appearance is one of a huge slab of onyx.

Six months of experimentation by master glassmakers made this new medium and technique possible for architectural decoration. The casting of the panel itself was completed in nine months.

An inscription in Italian, *Sempre Avanti Eterna Giovinezza* (Advance Forever Eternal Youth), runs across the top of the panel. Two lateral inscriptions, *Arte é Lavoro* and *Lavoro é Arte* (Art is Labor and Labor is Art), complete the framing of the figure. The inscriptions have been skilfully woven into the pattern of the design.

The colossal figure is thrown into bold relief by deep recesses or undercutting around its edges, and is superbly adapted to the rectangular area. Its strength is accentuated by its monumental interpretation; through the virility of its modeling, and broad representation of the large sinews of the body. Its simplicity — the figure stands against a plain background striped with horizontal ridges to relieve the monotony of the otherwise flat surface — is marked by the complete absence of detail to preserve the grandeur of the nude. The function of the horizontal ridges is to gather all the parts together in one assemblage.

An analysis of its linear design will reveal the perfect balance of the figure. Diagonals formed by the thighs are further emphasized by the rigid diagonal of the spade. The legs and torso form diagonals to counterbalance the spade in the interest of

stability. Contraction and distention of the body's muscles, particularly those of the arms and legs, show the physical counterparts of labor. Interesting abstract patterns are created by the stylization of the hair and soil. It is extraordinary for its simplicity.

Attilio's imposing and monumental bas-relief was apparently inspired by the male nudes in a series of bas-reliefs illustrating Genesis, executed by the renowned Sienese sculptor, Jacopo della Quercia, for the great portal of the Church of San Petronio, Bologna, in 1425-1438. One of the panels describes the biblical story of the *Expulsion of Adam and Eve* from Eden. In this bas-relief, *Adam* is shown plunging a spade into the earth with great energy, while *Eve* looks on somewhat perturbed. Attilio's affinity to della Quercia is unmistakable.

In both instances, the sculptors exploited the dramatic effects obtainable through the rhythmic arrangement of powerfully constructed nude figures. Their conceptions are simple, direct statements of the strength and dynamic power embodied within the muscular structure. Their portrayals are equally effective and decorative. Jacopo della Quercia, however, lacked Attilio's understanding of the anatomy of the human body, as a comparison of both figures will show. This technical deficiency, however, did not impair the beauty and design of della Quercia's bas-reliefs.

It is interesting to observe that della Quercia's *Adam and Eve* also inspired Michelangelo, and other Renaissance sculptors and painters. In painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican in Rome, Michelangelo used a similar figure in depicting *The Drunkenness of Noah*. Here the figure is clothed, but that does not conceal the influence of della Quercia.

The glass bas-relief may be seen above the main entrance of the *Palazzo d'Italia* at 626 Fifth Avenue. Its striking beauty and masculine vigor dominates the front facade of the building. In the evening, a soft light glows behind the glass panel to illumine the whole relief, but this illumination, in spite of its dramatic attractiveness mitigates the efficacy and forcefulness of the stalwart nude.

The cost of producing such a large sculpture was underestimated by several thousand dollars when it was first planned at Mr. Rockefeller's invitation. Fortunately, however, Mr. Rockefeller's interest in this pioneering project brought him to the sculptor's studio periodically to watch the progress of the work. One day, quite casually, Attilio remarked that the commission would cost him personally considerably more than he had originally estimated. Mr. Rockefeller did not seem impressed, and even failed to comment on the remark he had heard. Nothing more was said. The following morning, Attilio received a check for \$5,000.00 from Mr. Rockefeller with a note of gratitude and thanks.

A second glass panel, YOUTH LEADING INDUSTRY (Plate 78), similar in size to the first, was installed over the main entrance of the International Building in 1936. It symbolizes the new leadership of youth in commerce, industry, and world affairs. A youth, pointing out the road ahead to the charioteer, is shown running abreast of two charging horses. The action of the youth leading the charioteer represents the progress of industry and commerce under the leadership of youth. The chariot, symbolizes transportation, without which progress in business would be seriously retarded.

Every aspect of the composition has been carefully

planned and excellently treated. A balance of line and movement, realized in a two-dimensional formula, is in keeping with good design. Its pictorial quality adds immeasurably to the decorative function of the huge bas-relief.

Attilio again demonstrates his mastery of line and action. The two prancing horses resolve themselves into a diagonal arrangement. This diagonal is repeated again in the young man and is defined by his outstretched arm and left leg. The oblique disposition of these figures is, in turn, counterbalanced by the broad rays of sunlight and the dominant, vertical position of the charioteer. Stability is further realized by the sturdy figure of the charioteer who guides his horses with resolution in controlling their charge. This heroic figure pursues his carefully planned course with assurance and confidence. He follows it to his cherished goal with grim determination. This attitude is analogous to the prevailing practice in commerce and industry where plans are formulated in advance and schedules of operation and production are established beforehand to insure success.

Movement is suggested by the two rearing horses, the youth, and the direction indicated by the sweep of line and action. Despite the almost flat modeling of the horses, the conception of their form is sculptural. The great energy exerted by the horse in the background, in an effort to surge forward, is reflected by the open mouth and dilation of the nostrils. All in all, the composition is admirable and tells its story with clarity and directness. Immediately above the glass panel is a cartouche carved in stone containing a male and female figure.

Fabrication of the two panels required the development of new casting techniques. These two bas-reliefs herald the widespread use of large-scale castings in sculptured glass for architec-

tural adornment. Such glass screens provide a source of natural light for the lobbies of buildings and offer opportunities for unusual lighting effects at night when the artificial light of the interior illuminates the transparent panel producing an attractive glowing light.

A third bas-relief in stone was carved in 1927 for the doorway of another building in Rockefeller Center at 15 West 48 Street. This sculpture was carved *in situ* and entitled THE JOY OF LIFE (Plate 79). The highly decorative relief portrays a youthful Bacchus as its central theme. He is flanked on either side by a group of three standing figures. The graceful figure of the reclining Bacchus, holding a bunch of grapes aloft, serves as a device to merge the lateral groups into a single unit. Oblivious of the tribulations of adult life, the finely modeled youth is shown in his characteristic attitude of revelry.

The unusual attractiveness of the three figures comprising the left group is largely due to the compact disposition of the figures themselves. A young boy stands with a suggestion of awkwardness in the foreground of this group. Two female figures and a nude boy, standing closely together and slightly behind each other, constitute the group to the right. The outstretched hand of the central figure projects into the middle of the bas-relief to relieve the dullness of the otherwise unbroken wall surface. The unity of design, the gracefulness of skilfully arranged figures and the rhythmic formula used, are factors which contribute to the excellence of the relief.

In spite of the low relief in which the panel is carved, there is every indication of good plastic form. Its simplicity, the absence of angular movement and mannerisms, show exceedingly good taste. The figures are silhouetted against a background of color

which add to their decorative quality. Despite the compactness of design, there is no over-crowding, and the definitely two-dimensional character of the relief is in keeping with the best traditions of mural decoration.

A series of large circumferential curves of varying radii describe the outline of the background and enclose all the figures. This novel background is covered with an all-over pattern of geometric design. Other parts of the figures are also accented with color.

Rhythmic repetition of the graceful lines of the standing figures and their flat, two-dimensional description, give the bas-relief a strong architectural character. Its graphic language of linear patterns and flat, surface contours is an exquisite expression of the decorative quality of this composition.

IN THE JOY OF LIFE, the sculptor created a work of art of high merit and decorative beauty. The grace and dignity of the figures recall the celebrated Panathenaic frieze which circumscribes the naos wall of the Greek Parthenon.

Before completing the last bas-relief for Rockefeller Center, Attilio was notified of still another award. He had competed with other sculptors for the commission to design the PRESENT-DAY POSTMAN for the Post Office Building in Washington, D.C. Twelve statues, selected from many entries, were placed on exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in the winter of 1936. Attilio's figure (Plates 80, 81) was adjudged the best from the aesthetic and sculptural points of view, and he was subsequently given the commission. The figure was later cast in aluminum and placed in a suitable niche in the interior of the building.

The Postman is shown reading a handful of letters with

his carrier's bag dangling from one shoulder. His feet are comfortably apart and one senses he is about to walk any moment. The well-planned casualness of the Postman and the fortuitous moment in which he is portrayed, are life-like, animated qualities. Its fabric consists of nothing more than an organic grouping of simple masses.

The large space between the two legs always presents a troublesome problem for the sculptor. Ordinarily, a long coat would be used to reduce the non-sculptural space. In this instance, it was not possible as the long coat is not part of the Postman's approved apparel. Luckily, however, the figure has a wall for a background and the observer, consequently, is less conscious of the void inasmuch as his eye does not go off into space. There is no other device available to overcome the unpleasantness of empty spaces. To represent a man with his two legs together is awkward and ungainly, and such a position is not conducive to a natural, balanced pose. In Attilio's statue, the empty space is defined as a long, narrow triangle and not unattractive. A sculptor prefers to emphasize the positive elements of his design, viz., the sculptural masses, and not the negative, viz., the empty spaces. It is recognized that in designing a statue the positive and negative elements must be harmoniously related as in architecture.

Many contemporary sculptors make it an inviolable rule to eliminate all negative elements on the well-founded theory that sculpture is essentially an art of three-dimensional form and not one of voids or empty spaces. In keeping with this idea, masses are distorted and exaggerated to direct greater consciousness on the formal arrangement of sculptural form.

The editors of *Pencil Points* recognized the outstanding qualities of Attilio's statue long before the award of the commis-

sion was publicly known, and reproduced a full-page photograph of the figure in the November, 1936, issue.

A bronze figure of RICHARD ELLIS (Plates 82, 83) was erected to his memory during the Texas Centennial in 1936, in Waxachachie, Texas. It was designed by Attilio. The inscription, which gives a brief history of the man, reads:

“Richard Ellis, by birth and education, a Virginian, through residence, 1813-1825, an Alabaman jurist in that year Texas claimed him. As President of the Constitutional Convention in 1836 and as a member of the Congress of the Young Republic, he steered the helm of State through troubled waters. Nurtured in the culture of the Old South, practiced in the application of law, he exercised, in behalf of Texas, courage, vision, and leadership. Born February 14, 1781, died December 20, 1846. ‘Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view, that stand upon the threshold of the new.’”

The more than seven-foot statue stands before a monolith of Texas granite on the courthouse square. The statue is that of a tall, strongly built man of middle age, dressed in the period of about 1820. His face is lean and strong, and he is shown gesticulating. Like the statues of JAMES MONROE (Plate 68) and HENRY WATKINS ALLEN (Plate 69), he holds a sheaf of papers in his left hand while seeming to emphasize a point with his right. The figure is draped with a long coat fastened by two buttons. A large, unbroken mass is achieved by the simple expedient of keeping the coat buttoned. Its handling is bold and daring, and the general, over-all impression is amply sculpturesque. The only discordant note may be the upturned corner of the long coat which inter-

rupts the broad, sweeping mass of the figure. As a problem in sculptural design, it is superior to the statues mentioned.

One of Attilio's most delightful non commissioned sculptures is the charming LAUGHING BOY AND GOAT (Plates 84, 85), traditionally a favorite subject among sculptors. This amusing group brings to mind an excellent example of Hellenistic genre art, *The Boy and Goose*, by the Greek sculptor, Boethus. It represents a young boy struggling with a goose. Another equally charming group, a derivative from the same source, is the *Boy with a Dolphin*, a bronze statuette and part of the fountain in the *cortile* of *Palazzo Vecchio*, Florence. It was designed by the Renaissance sculptor and painter, Andrea del Verrocchio (1435-1488).

Attilio's LAUGHING BOY AND GOAT was undoubtedly suggested by the two sculptures mentioned. He probably knew Boethus' statue very well—it is in the Capitoline Museum in Rome—it must be remembered that Attilio lived in that city five years while attending the *R. Accademia di Belle Arti*. He also must have been familiar with Verrocchio's statuette in Florence, a city he frequently visited.

A common attribute of the three groups may be found in the same careful and realistic interpretation. Insofar as sculptural composition is concerned, Attilio's group shows greater skill in handling plastic form and is distinctly superior in design. Boethus' composition follows the logically effective pyramidal arrangement. Verrocchio's design is not too successfully organized. A minor and major triangle, formed by intersecting diagonals, make up the structure of Attilio's design. The diagonal organization of the boy and goat may be compared to two forces moving in oppo-

site directions, counteracting each other to establish balance and equilibrium.

Attilio is a master in portraying the subtleties and refinements of latent motion. Psychological responses to impending motion, motion suggested or about to be activated, may be felt in many of his statues including DANCING FAUN (Plate 7), FRAGELINA (Plate 38), FLOWER OF THE ALPS (Plate 50), SPIRIT OF YOUTH (Plate 59), THE WAVE (Plate 70), and so forth. In this group, a wild mountain goat is attempting to plunge forward but a chubby boy is playfully restraining the goat by pulling it back. The instant depicted shows movement at a momentary standstill.

The mischievous and gay little boy is a wholesome and pleasing picture of physical well-being. The great emotional appeal of this work is shared by everyone. This subject reflects the sculptor's gayer mood and his ability to interpret familiar subjects with independent originality and idealism. It also shows that his aesthetic sensibility pervades all his creations whether they are serious or frivolous in content or intention. Regardless of subject matter, Attilio's sculptures show a complacency which is engaging and contagious.

Two-feet seven-inches tall and cast in lead, the group of the LAUGHING BOY AND GOAT was acquired by Archer M. Huntington in 1937 for his sculpture collection at Brookgreen Gardens, his country estate in Georgetown County, South Carolina. A bronze copy is owned by L. Andrew Reinhard of Bronxville, N.Y., one of the designers of Rockefeller Center.

A huge bas-relief was erected by Attilio in 1938, in the interior of the Post Office Building in Whitman, Massachusetts. The town's main industry at one time was the manufacturing of

large bells for church towers. In his relief, Attilio depicts a large bell with the word "Liberty" inscribed below it in raised letters. The bell is framed by two rugged workers with large sinews, each holding a heavy sledge hammer. The modeling is bold and in one plane, and the story is related with direct simplicity.

One of the sculptor's saddest disappointments is the POLICEMEN'S MEMORIAL MONUMENT (Plate 86), commissioned by the City of New York. Although it was completed in 1940, the colossal bronze monument remains in a city repository, awaiting a suitable site not yet designated by city authorities.

This monumental work is dedicated to the vigilant and brave officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. A stalwart policeman, properly attired in uniform, stands at ease with a furled flag held close to his side. His right hand falls gently and protectingly over the shoulder of a youth standing beside him. The wide-eyed young boy stands against the policeman, holding his protecting arm in a spirit of friendliness. This gesture is intended to show the boy's confidence and security in the authority of the law. Unfortunately, the arrangement of the boy's two arms around that of the police officer is too confusing and inaeesthetic. Too many empty spaces occur in the design by this poor disposition of arms and the somewhat graceless position of the boy. In the original study, a large German shepherd dog sat quietly at the boy's feet with its head raised watchfully. Had the right hand of the boy been placed on the collar of the dog, a more compact and sculptural grouping would have been achieved with a decided improvement in design.

The powerful figure of the policeman is well over life-size and simply tailored. His attitude is stern yet kindly, and one quickly gathers a feeling of authority tempered with friendliness.

contours. The stylization of the hair is again repeated in the treatment of the drapery which wraps itself around one thigh and serves the practical purpose of filling the otherwise open space between the two outstretched legs.

The problem of empty spaces has been effectively resolved by the arrangement of the drapery. Moreover, the sculptor did not lose sight of the fact that the figure would be seen from below. Therefore, the contours and silhouette had to be precisely stated to add to the rhythmic design of the figure, and the impression one gathers is quite exciting. Psychologically, a figure appears more slender when seen against a background of open sky, and this factor was utilized in planning the aesthetic character of the monument. Before the figure of **ELECTRICITY** was designed in full scale, a half life-size model was made in plaster and placed above eye level in the sculptor's studio to study its design and effectiveness.

The simplicity of the **MARCONI MEMORIAL** is monumental and its dignity is both attractive and impressive.

With the completion of this public monument, the sculptor had hoped to spend the rest of his life on creations of his own choosing. But even before the **MARCONI MEMORIAL** was dedicated, he was persuaded by friends to design a portrait bust of **MAYOR LOUIS F. EDWARDS** of Long Beach, N. Y., who had been innocently slain by a crazed policeman. The bronze bust, set on a mahogany console, was unveiled on November 11, 1940, in the rotunda of the City Hall Building.

Attilio enjoyed untold delight in the statue of a three-year-old boy which he completed in 1941-42. His interest in the portrayal of children dates back to the very inception of his career as a sculptor. His numerous reliefs of children have been a source



PLATE 43

Mrs E H Harriman House, N. Y.

MUSIC

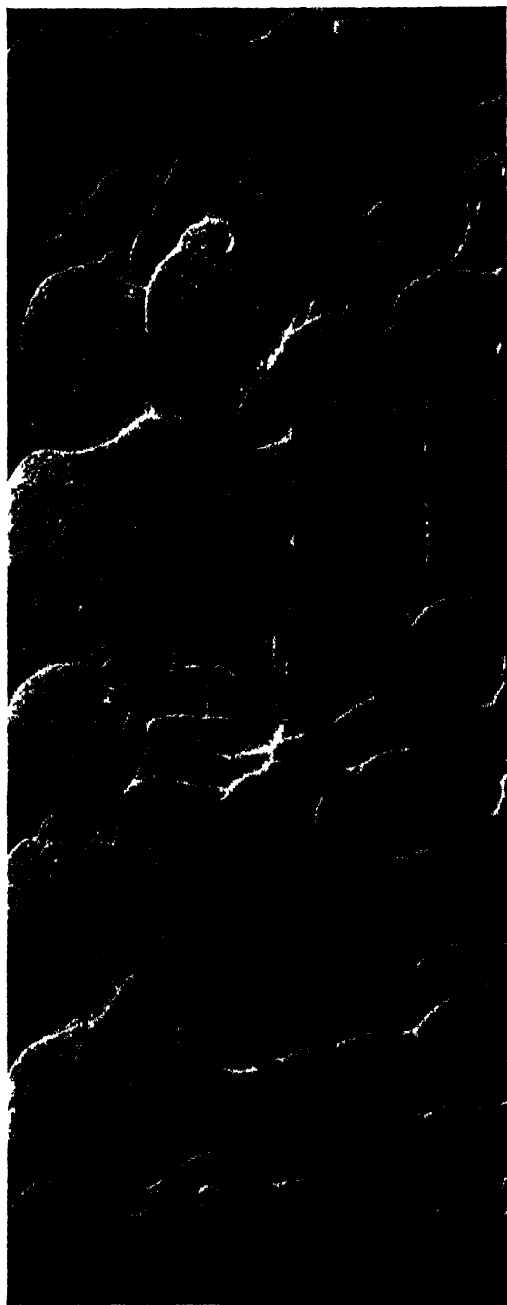


PLATE 44

Edward Drummond Libbey Tomb, Woodlawn Cemetery, Toledo, Ohio
LABOR

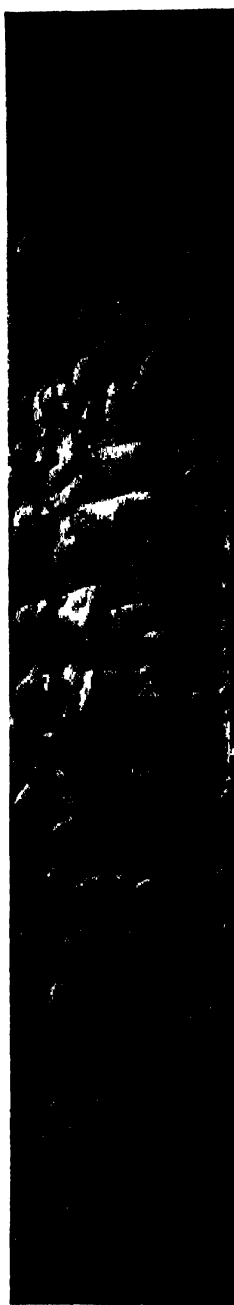


PLATE 45

Edward Drummond Libbey Tomb, Woodlawn Cemetery, Toledo, Ohio

of complete satisfaction, and when he found occasion to do another study, as in this case, he poured forth his soul. Perhaps his intense feeling for these young subjects is a manifestation of a love which had never been given full expression and which may be attributed indirectly to his unhappy married life. The author vividly remembers the sculptor's fatherly handling of young Ronald Gulias when he was posing for the POLICEMEN'S MEMORIAL MONUMENT. His treatment of the young lad was extremely gentle, sympathetic and kind.

In designing the bronze statue of Master ALFRED RHETT DU PONT, JR., he was working with a familiar subject enjoying his personal interest—Attilio has known the du Pont family many years. He made periodic trips to the boy's home in Armonk, New York, to complete his study, later finishing the statue in his studio. The boy is shown standing with one foot slightly more advanced than the other, holding a ball in his right hand. His well-shaped head and animated face is turned gently to one side. Obeying the natural laws of child behavior, the artist does not portray the youngster in a calm, quiet attitude. His entire body is charged with vitality and life, and is suggestive of the restlessness of children. His body is soft, yet strong, and the contours are simple and descriptive. This naturalistic study reveals the masculine character and an engaging human quality.

Attilio's interest in Master du Pont prompted him to carve a life-size portrait (Plate 90) in marble soon after he completed the bronze statue. This portrait is one of the sculptor's finest. It is a sincere effort and sympathetic in every detail. There is a consciousness of the finest physical and spiritual attributes of youth which is astounding. Here is a youngster whose individual character is expressed through a universal idealization embodying all

youth. This elegant and aristocratic portrait shows a tenderness and sensitivity which is not easily found in such works. The marble from which this exquisite portrait was carved, was a choice piece which the sculptor had put away more than forty years ago for just such an occasion. In carving this bust he not only explored the medium to its fullest to bring out its inherent beauty, but shows his own indisputable artistry and aesthetic consciousness.

This portrait is the most recent one of a long, colorful career which began in 1885, when he was only nineteen years old. The sculpture he has produced in the past fifty-nine years of his life is a lasting tribute to him as an artist and to his superb creative genius. His influence in the development of an indigenous American art is indelibly marked on the character of American sculpture in the first thirty years of this century. He is one of the founders of our American culture and his stalwart contribution to its formulation will remain ever significant.

This amazing personality, at the age of seventy-eight, is ambitiously planning new creations and, judging from the aesthetic quality of several recently completed sketches, they promise to be his best work.

CHAPTER VIII

Collaboration With His Sculptor Brothers — Their Close Association — Piccirilli's Friendship With Other Famous American Sculptors — His Election to the *Insigne Artistica Congregazione Pontificia de' Virtuosi al Pantheon*, Rome — Piccirilli's Writings

An account of Attilio Piccirilli's life would be incomplete without mentioning his life-long association with his five sculptor brothers. As youngsters working harmoniously together in their father's studio, they learned the value and spirit of cooperation, and this relationship has continued to this day notwithstanding their individual artistic temperaments and personal differences. Perhaps this secret of working together can be explained by the strong emotional bond which embraces them, respect for the opinions of each other, and a spirit of friendliness and altruism which always prevails. All these factors, reinforced by a common interest, have kept this intimate association vibrantly alive through an eventful life leading all the brothers to recognition as sculptors and master craftsmen.

They arrive at their large studio on East 142nd Street in the Bronx, New York, from their respective homes at eight o'clock every morning. Attilio, until a year ago, lived alone in the huge studio — his brother, Getulio, now lives with him. Al-

though each brother has his own studio, many commissions require them to work together. They joke amiably with one another during their work, discussing a variety of subjects of mutual interest and sharing each other's confidences and joys. At noon promptly every day, they gather around the square kitchen table for lunch, generally prepared by one of the brothers. They seldom sit at the table without guests or visitors. The Piccirilli Studio is perhaps the most frequently visited studio in New York. This picturesque place, with its circular winding steps leading from floor to floor, is the largest studio in America. It consists of three communicating buildings with the second and third floors divided into exhibition rooms and work shops. Two of the three buildings contain immense studios with huge doors on the street level. A one-story brick structure abuts the main building and is used as a repository.

Thousands of school children, teachers, artists and others have visited the Piccirilli Studio since its establishment. Work stops immediately on such occasions and, in their characteristically hospitable manner, the brothers assume their social obligations as host and politely escort the visitors throughout the studio. When such visits are scheduled beforehand, large trays of sandwiches, milk, soda and wine are generously served, and the brothers have as much fun as the visitors. On leaving, visitors are as much overwhelmed by the friendliness and hospitality of their hosts as they are by the impressive studio and beautiful marbles.

With possibly one exception, all the brothers share the same serious mindedness and indefatigable capacity for work. This one exception may be Ferruccio, the oldest brother, who returned to Pietrasanta in Tuscany, Italy, about 1926, to make his home in *Villa Marina di Motrone*, the family villa. While he lived

in America, he made many extended trips to Italy, sometimes for pleasure, but more often for business. He was handsome in his youth, and before his marriage, spent a rather carefree and adventurous life, enjoying great popularity among the ladies. As a boy, Ferruccio studied art at the Academy of Massa before entering his father's studio, and although he had great talent, he never really exploited it to its fullest. He was unpredictable and always doing the unexpected.

It will be remembered that when Attilio arrived in New York in 1888 with his brother Furio, he learned that Ferruccio had preceded them, without the knowledge of the elder Piccirilli who had sent him to Egypt on business. In 1897, Ferruccio went to Italy to purchase marble for his father. When he arrived, he heard that Ricciotti Garibaldi, second son of the famous Giuseppe Garibaldi, was recruiting an army of volunteers to fight the Turks in the Graeco-Turkish War. He joined Garibaldi's forces and left for Greece, during which time his father waited patiently for the marble which never arrived. At the outbreak of World War I, Ferruccio was again in Italy, and did not return with his wife until the end of the war. Joseph, the older of Ferruccio's two sons, is a prominent architect in Pietrasanta. Bruno, a promising young sculptor who has exhibited extensively, is on the teaching faculty of Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. They were both born in America. Four of the Piccirilli brothers have children, and Bruno is the only one to carry on the family tradition.

Furio, the third brother, studied at the *R. Accademia di Belle Arti* in Rome, as Attilio had done before him. Furio is gifted as an artist and linguist. His father encouraged him to study languages as he had a premonition of their usefulness. When the Piccirilli family was planning seriously to leave Massa-Carrara, Furio,

who was not yet twenty, was sent to England to continue his studies and to find a suitable home for his family. Instead, he found employment with a century-old establishment of sculptors, *Farmer & Brindley*, which had been commissioned to carve the reredos for St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

Furio's deepest affection is for his brother Attilio, whom he has looked to for guidance, advice and encouragement. In the eyes of their parents, these two boys, two years apart in age, were always closely associated. They studied art at the same academy in Rome, and when Furio was sent to London, he was joined soon after by Attilio. Again, when Attilio left London on his way to America, Furio accompanied him. Every brother has his own work shop in the Piccirilli Studio, except that Furio and Attilio always worked together in the same atelier. There is no doubt that in this intimate relationship, they exerted some influence on each other's art. Next to Attilio, Furio is the most prominent among the Piccirilli brothers. They are the best known of the six brothers and both received early recognition and acclaim.

Furio is an active person and lives a rich, creative life. As a young man, before the Piccirilli Studio was organized, he was never without employment. On his arrival in New York, his experience in London and his knowledge of fine architectural sculpture enabled him to obtain employment with the *Perth Amboy Terra Cotta Company* in New Jersey. Furio was then instrumental in securing a similar position for his brother Ferruccio. Furio's fine artistry may be judged by the awards accorded him in America before he returned to Rome to make his home in 1926. He followed Attilio's example in exhibiting his sculpture widely throughout the country. Furio won recognition at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, N.Y. (1901), the St. Louis Ex-

position in Missouri (1904), and the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, California (1915), where his groups for the *Court of the Four Seasons* "were much admired."

In 1920, Furio carried out alone the entire sculptural decoration of the new Parliament House in Winnipeg, Canada. A monumental figure of *Pierre Gautier de la Varenne*, discoverer of the Northwest, dominates the whole sculptural organization, and of this figure, Lorado Taft writes in *The History of American Sculpture*, New York, 1930: "Canada possesses one of the gems of this continent; we have no finer architectural sculpture than this figure." Again in 1929, Furio was awarded the *Ellin P. Speyer Memorial Prize* of The National Academy for his *Seal*, carved in black marble and later purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Another copy was acquired by Bookgreen Gardens, South Carolina.

Some of Furio's best works, produced during his residence in America, are: *Mother-and-Child*, Portrait of *Iole*, *Eurydice*, *Young Mother*, *St. Cecelia* (S. Agnes' Church, New York City), *Ostrich*, *Relief Portrait of a Child*, and many nude female figures. Also a statue of the Spanish painter, *Murillo*, commissioned in 1925 by the New Art Gallery in San Diego, California. It would be interesting to trace Attilio's influence on the work of his younger brother, but such a study could hardly be undertaken in a biography of Attilio.

In 1921, Furio went to Rome, and during his visit there, married his first cousin. He remained in Rome several years before returning to America to rejoin his brothers. Furio had made plans to settle here permanently, but the illness of his older boy induced him to return to Italy where he hoped the boy might recuperate. It was a very sad moment in Attilio's life when Furio left the

United States with his wife and three children. The boy's health rallied for several months but he suffered a relapse and soon died. Several years later the younger boy also died. This tragedy saddened the father deeply, and his desire to be near his departed ones made him decide to remain in Rome permanently where he established his reputation as an outstanding sculptor. Attilio's affection for his brother Furio may be sensed in his sympathetic portrait (Plate 41), in which he so descriptively illustrates his fine, sensitive qualities.

Just as Attilio and Furio were drawn together, so were Masaniello and Orazio, the fourth and fifth brothers. Although most of their work has been done in collaboration and in the field of architectural sculpture, Orazio is well known for many beautiful sculptures, including *Black Eagle*, *Fighting Cock*, *The Morning*. The National Academy awarded him the *Ellin P. Speyer Memorial Prize* in 1926 for his *Black Eagle*. This prize had been awarded previously to Attilio and Furio.

Masaniello, nicknamed Tom, studied sculpture four years at the Academy of Massa. Orazio studied with the French sculptor, Edouard Roiné, in New York. Orazio was not quite sixteen years old when he came to America with his family, and, consequently, did not enjoy the opportunities of his older brothers who had studied art in Italy. Working daily beside his father and brothers was perhaps the best schooling a young sculptor could aspire to. After studying several years with Roiné, he did not enter his father's studio immediately, but worked for a considerable time on the Fifth Avenue mansion of Senator William A. Clark of Montana, the copper king.

Tom and Orazio together carved many important architectural and sculptural decorations in collaboration with the most



PLATE 47

Collection of the Sculptor

THE OUTCAST



PLATE 48

Church of St. Mark's In-the-Bowwerie, N. Y.

THE OUTCAST

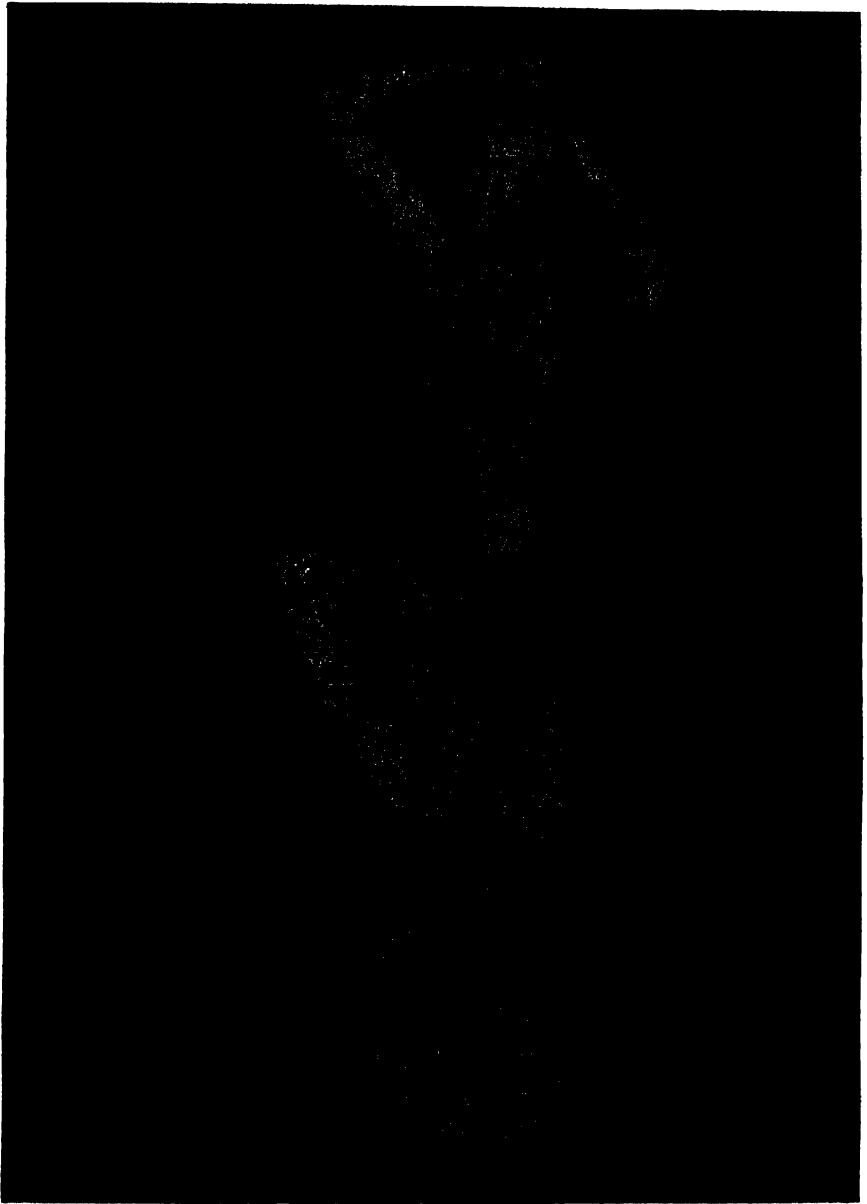


PLATE 49

Collection of Mrs Lewis R Morris, N Y.

TWILIGHT OR CREPUSCOLO

[280]

outstanding American architects. They worked with Sanford White, Henry Bacon, John M. Carrère, Thomas Hastings, Charles F. McKim, Ralph A. Cram, William R. Mead, Bertram C. Goodhue and many others. They worked on St. Bartholomew's Church, the Boston Library, the Frick House, designed all the sculptural work for the reredos of the Riverside Church in New York, the San Diego Tower in California, the Capitol Building at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and too many others to mention.

Tom's two sons, Sanzio and Albert, were not attracted to the arts. Sanzio is an engineering mechanic, and Albert is in the insurance business. Beatrice, Tom's only daughter, is a high school teacher. Orazio's son Nathan, a graduate of Columbia University with a Doctor of Philosophy degree in economics and statistics, is now an officer in the United States Navy. He, too, decided not to follow in his father's footsteps. Ginestra, Orazio's daughter, married Edward Hurley, a successful architect, after completing her education.

The youngest brother, Getulio, is perhaps the most energetic and spirited of all the Piccirilli brothers. He studied with his father and has worked with the most important sculptors and architects of the last forty-five years. Besides being a very capable sculptor, he serves as the business administrator of the Piccirilli Studio. Friendly and keen-witted, he is well informed on many subjects and is almost encyclopedic. He has an amazing memory and recalls vividly the dealings the Piccirilli brothers have had with the greatest personalities in American art. Until last year, when his wife died, he lived in Westchester, but has since returned to live in his spacious studio. Getulio has no children.

Getulio has lived such a busy life carving models for other noted sculptors that he has had little time to devote himself to

his own creations. He was only eighteen years old when John Quincy Adams Ward (1830-1910) entrusted him with the carving of the great pedimental group of the New York Stock Exchange Building. Its execution was the biggest thrill of his life. The central figure is twenty-two feet high and executed from a model only one-fifth its size — a daring undertaking for a youth of eighteen and a tribute to his ability as a master stone cutter. Another monument which gave him untold delight was the carving of Daniel Chester French's huge figure of *Abraham Lincoln* in the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C. This colossal figure was carved from twenty-eight blocks of Georgia marble, and the height of the seated Lincoln alone is twenty-two feet.

Getulio has collaborated with Paul W. Bartlett (1865-1927), Daniel Chester French (1850-1931), Frederick W. MacMonnies (1863-1937), Hermon A. MacNeil (1866-), J. Massey Rhind (1860-1936), Karl T. Bitter (1867-1915), Robert I. Aitken (1878-), Adolph A. Weinman (1870-), to mention a few sculptors. And he also worked with many famous architects, including Cass Gilbert (1859-1934), George B. Post (1837-1913), Henry Bacon (1866-1924), Charles F. McKim (1847-1909), Thomas Hastings (1860-1929), William R. Mead (1846-1928), John M. Carrère (1858-1911), Sanford White (1853-1906), and others.

The Piccirilli Studio contains so many original models by top-ranking sculptors that it is a true sanctuary of American sculpture. A tour through the large halls, spacious work shops and vast studios not only develops appreciation in sculpture; one might easily trace the whole history and development of American sculpture. All the important productions of George Grey Barnard

(1863-1938), for example, are stored in a separate building of the Piccirilli Studio. So is the sculpture of other famous Americans.

Ever since the Piccirilli Studio was built, the Piccirillis have graciously extended their studio facilities to any sculptor desiring to work there. This generous offer was accepted by men like James E. Fraser (1876-), Augustus St. Gaudens (1848-1907), Daniel Chester French, Frederick W. MacMonnies, Paul W. Bartlett, George Grey Barnard, Olin L. Warner (1844-1896), Charles H. Niehaus (1855-1935), Karl T. Bitter, Lorado Taft (1860-1936), Edward McCartan (1879-), Andrew O'Connor (1874-1941), and a host of others. At noon, they were summoned to lunch to eat and drink heartily with their hospitable hosts. Thus the Piccirilli Studio became more than a meeting place for the best known men in American art, it became an institution. No art historian can speak with greater knowledge and authority of these great men, whose early interpretation of our culture established the heritage and tradition in American art, than the six Piccirilli brothers. These brothers shared their confidences, their successes and their tribulations. No wonder the Piccirillis are so highly esteemed!

The affection and regard these great Americans had for Attilio's artistic prowess, can be illustrated by an interesting incident which occurred in the early part of the Twentieth Century. Albert Jaegers (1868-1930) had been awarded the commission for the *Baron von Steuben Memorial* as a result of a nation-wide competition, but his premonition of death kept his mind in a state of continued turmoil, if not actual fear. Anxious to make every provision to insure the completion of this important commission which he already had begun, Jaegers wrote the following letter to Attilio:

"Jan. 29, 1907

"Mr. Attilio Piccirilli —

"My dear Attilio

"In case of my death, or if I should become incapacitated for some reason or other to complete my contract with the Government to erect the monument to Baron von Steuben in Washington, D.C., I would desire you to finish and complete the sculpture remaining incompleated and assist and help my wife or heirs to superintend the execution of any contract in connection with this monument, remaining incompleated.

"I express this desire not only from my perfect confidence in your sense of fairness in dealing with my wife or heirs, but also from the knowledge that in an artistic sense I could name no sculptor whose work would be more sympathetic to me than yours, when you do me the honor to complete what may be denied me to do.

"I remain in sincere friendship,

"Yours

"Albert Jaegers"

Albert Jaegers' fear of death was nothing more than a figment of the imagination caused by overwork. He not only lived to complete the *Baron von Steuben Monument*, in honor of a foreign officer who came to this country during the time of the American Revolution to assist General George Washington, but lived to execute many others as well. This monument is Jaegers' most important work. In a supplementary chapter to Lorado Taft's *The History of American Sculpture* (New York, 1930),

Mrs. Adeline Adams writes: "the Von Steuben (1910) portrait and attendant groups, combined with admirable architecture, form one of the finest monuments in the nation's capital, and therefore in the United States." Jaegers' letter is a fine tribute to Attilio's character and a declaration of the esteem he enjoyed as an artist. This letter manifests a sentiment shared by those who know Attilio.

Attilio loves to tell about his great admiration for and pleasant association with Olin Warner, John Quincy Adams Ward, Charles Calverley, Augustus St. Gaudens, Daniel Chester French, Paul Bartlett, and Karl Bitter. Attilio was always impressed by Warner's masterful handling and genial interpretation of the portrait in which beauty expresses the spiritual character with sculptural simplicity and intuitive understanding. Attilio's friendship with Warner was admittedly an education for Attilio who still remembers him with great devotion. Warner taught Attilio the plastic value of simplicity and the folly of reducing the effectiveness of sculptural mass by details. From him, Attilio learned the skilfull elimination of holes occurring in the carving of nostrils and ears to lessen the translucency of marble and to strengthen its structural mass instead. Warner was a unique artist with extraordinary ability shown not only in his magnificent portraits, but also in his delicate bas-reliefs which were a revelation to Attilio for their sheer beauty. "Warner was a great artist," recalls Attilio, "although somewhat lazy. He loved the atmosphere of my studio so much that he spent a good deal of his time with me." Attilio carved many of Warner's portraits in marble, and during execution of these commissions, Warner practically lived with the Piccirilli brothers who were extremely fond of him.

Another deeply esteemed personality is Herbert Adams. "He is one of America's greatest artists and a fine gentleman," says Attilio with proud conviction. "No other portrait has made such an everlasting impression upon me as his exquisite portrait of his wife." Speaking of Adams, leads naturally to Augustus Saint-Gaudens, long an intimate friend of Herbert Adams. Piccirilli remembers that in his wide acquaintance with artists over a period of more than half a century, no one looked upon his art with such serious consciousness and devotion as Saint-Gaudens. "He was blessed with the soul and creative genius of an artist," recalls Attilio, "and worked with painstaking care and delicacy. Every artist respected him highly." Saint-Gaudens worked in the Piccirilli Studio for months on end. He would toil ceaselessly on a block of marble to extract all its beauty. If, in the final analysis, his creation fell short of his exalted artistic ideal, he would cast it aside and begin anew. He was a kind and humble man, enjoying considerable popularity for his talents and gentlemanly qualities.

John Quincy Adams Ward is remembered for his many notable achievements and for the fact that he was a difficult person to please. Many of his statues were carved by the Piccirillis, and he maintained a standard of excellence which required superlative effort and artistry. Ward spent many hours at the Piccirilli Studio supervising the carving of his plaster models. He always knew what he wanted, and was uncompromising in his insistence on perfection once an artistic thought crystalized in his mind. A literal duplication of his models was all he sought from the marble carvers who converted his plaster figures into permanent creations. Ward was not a stone carver, and this fact may explain why his

interest in the material substance of the marble exceeded the human effort involved in bringing that substance to life.

Charles Calverley (1833-1914) and Paul W. Bartlett (1865-1925) were also close friends of Attilio who knew them well—they were direct opposites insofar as their art was concerned. Calverley was a typical American sculptor who had received all his training in this country. He was a clever craftsman and handled his medium expertly. Calverley was a man of simple habits and taste, qualities which were imprinted indelibly in his work. Attilio admired the sensitive quality of Calverley's sculpture, and, inasmuch as they frequently worked together, Attilio learned many tricks of the carver's art from this association.

Bartlett had received his education and training in Paris and the flavor of his art is distinctly French. Unlike Calverley who was a skilful stone cutter, Bartlett worked almost exclusively in clay and most of the marble statues attributed to him were carved by the Piccirillis. Like many other sculptors, Bartlett worked in the Piccirilli Studio many years; Attilio even collaborated with him on several commissions. Piccirilli remembers that Bartlett's reputation was more widespread in France than in America, although he was considered a superb sculptor by Americans and Frenchmen alike.

Attilio's acquaintance with so many different, but equally interesting personalities was a source of enrichment and education. From this invaluable experience he acquired an understanding of these outstanding artists and an appreciation of their art which few writers possess. His studio was and is the meeting place of prominent sculptors, and this known fact brought many to its doors, anxious to become part of the elite "inner circle" of celebrated art men.

The man who endeared himself to Attilio and his brothers more than anyone else was Daniel Chester French, who was largely responsible for the early recognition of the Piccirillis. French was the first American sculptor to discover the artistic strength and versatility of the Piccirillis — he became their most intimate friend and ardent admirer during his long, eventful life. French was a New Englander by birth and was reared in an atmosphere of culture and refinement. In his early twenties, French went to Florence to study for two years and often referred to this beautiful city of the Renaissance as his spiritual home. This ingrain love of Italian art and culture may explain his spiritual affinity to Attilio.

Attilio speaks of French with deep reverence and affection, attributing his own success in art to this colorful American. French's friendliness and encouragement fired Attilio's ambition, and it was he who made Attilio first realize the future success which lay before him. Undoubtedly the most widely known American sculptor of his day, French not only introduced the Piccirillis to other great personalities in art but he recommended Attilio for many commissions which he was too busy to accept. Moreover, almost every statue French designed in the last forty years of his life was entrusted to the Piccirillis for transcription in marble. This accounted for French's tremendous fecundity.

French regarded the Piccirillis as gifted artists and master carvers, and reasserted his faith in their proven ability again and again by the numerous commissions awarded Attilio on French's recommendation when Attilio was striving hard to win recognition. The fame of the elder Piccirilli and his six sons, and the for-

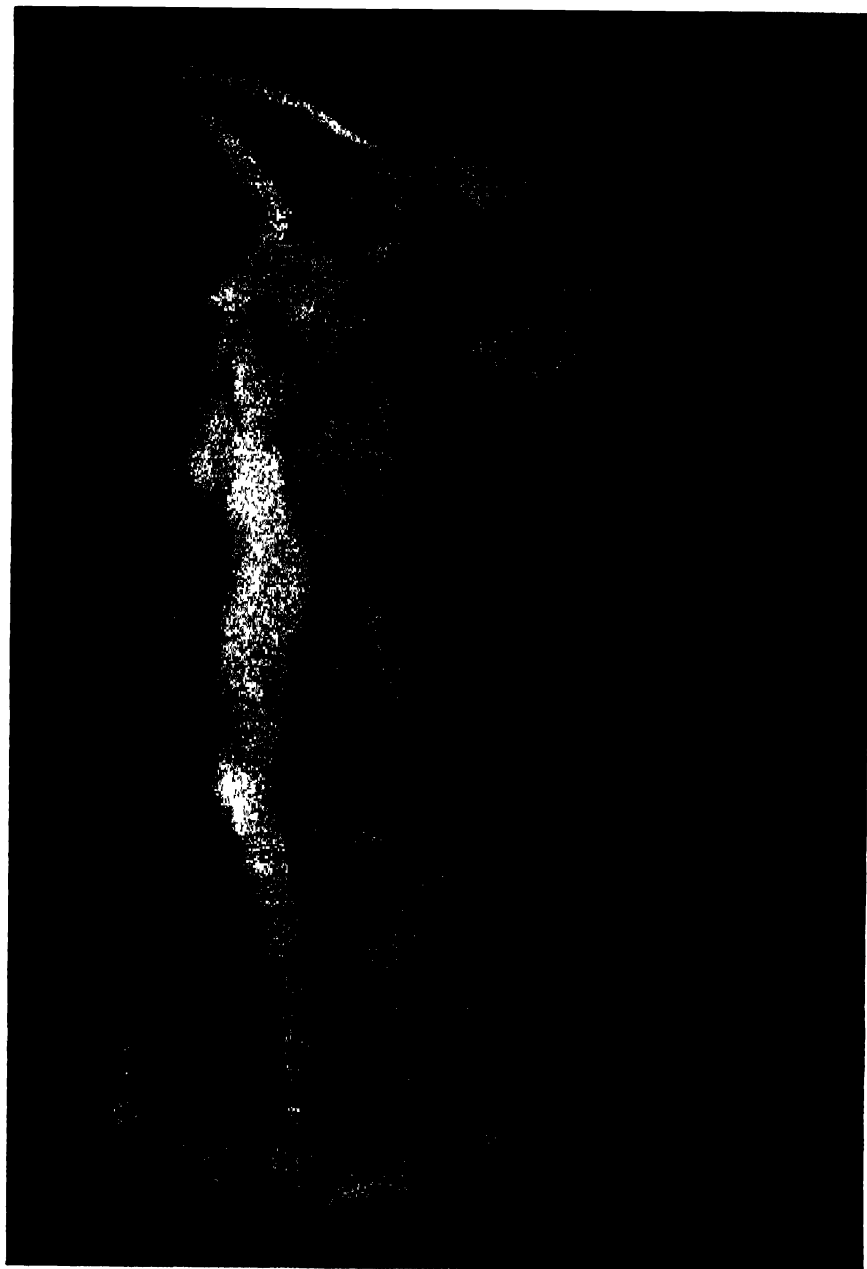
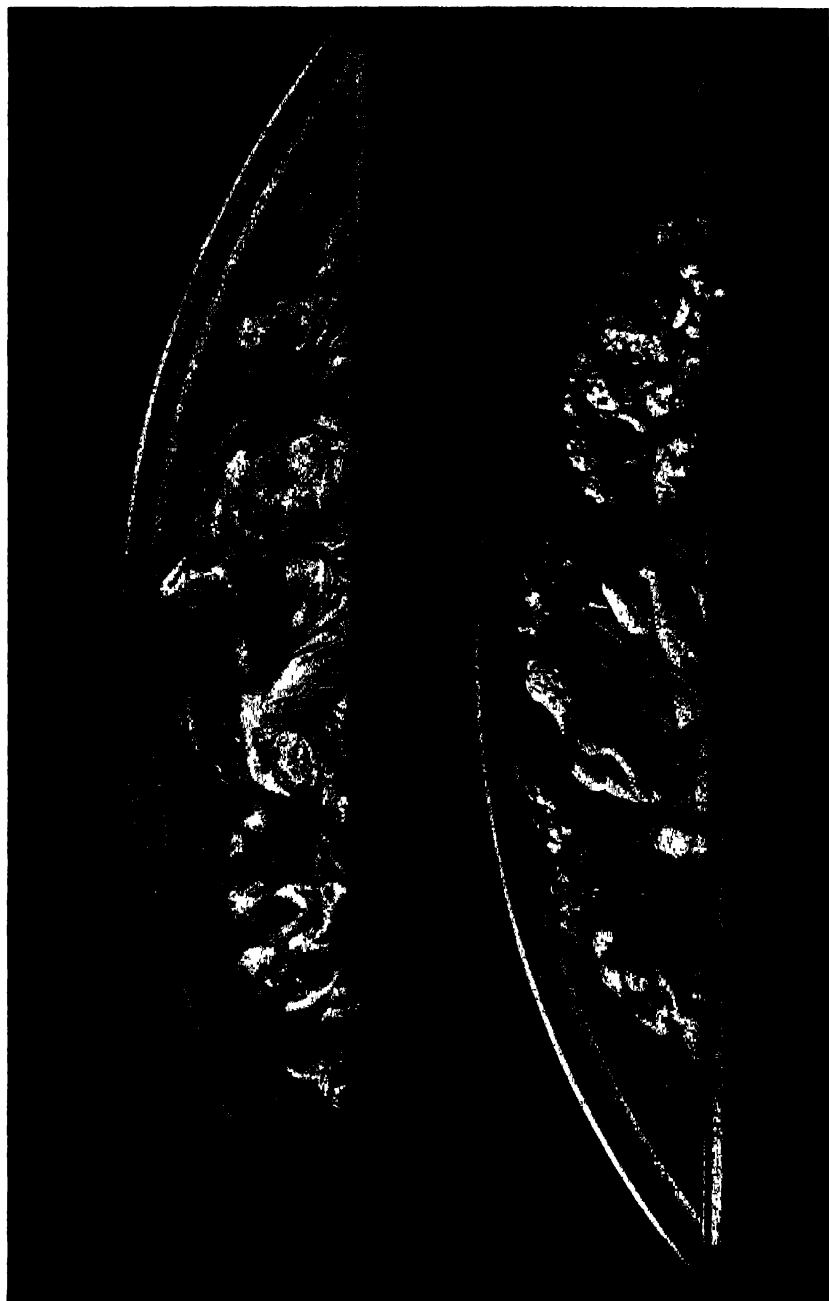


PLATE 50

Collection of Lawrence P. Fisher, Detroit, Michigan

FLOWER OF THE ALPS



tune they were able to amass in a comparatively short time in America, are directly attributable to this generous friend.

Attilio likes to think of French as a man like the famous essayist, Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose portrait bust and statue French designed for the Public Library at Concord, Massachusetts. "French was a man of noble instincts. He was a sincere person and a fine gentleman who used his prominent position to assist younger men of proven talents. If he liked your work, he would commend it honestly, without indulging in flattery. Many sought his counsel and judgment because his integrity was well known."

French was well versed in the art of the stone carver, though his preoccupation with many commissions made him do little of this work himself. Carving French's many statues was an education itself—he was always on hand at the Piccirilli Studio when one of his statues was being carved and the discussions on art which ensued were always very instructive. Attilio likes to recall the pleasant hours he thus enjoyed in the company of this great American sculptor. They shared each other's trusts and talked forever on art. These two men had much in common and both contributed to their enduring friendship.

Attilio's long acquaintance with many American artists places him in a unique position. This close association gave him an insight into their characters and art, making his experience rare among art men. So many sculptors worked in his studio that he soon learned the personal devices which distinguish one artist's work from another's. Attilio became familiar with their habits of work, and during the usual discussions on art carried on in the workshops and around the kitchen table at lunch time, Attilio became conversant with their philosophies of art and ideals. Attilio

is one of several remaining links between the sculptors of the early Twentieth Century, who together established the foundation of American art, and those of the present day. The work of men like Attilio makes it easier to understand the sculpture of today. A history of American art can well be reconstructed from Attilio's life and personal experiences with other art personalities. Attilio could very well fulfill the same function today, and with greater authority and accuracy, that Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) performed in the Sixteenth Century when he recorded the story of the Italian Renaissance by writing the biographies of the famous art men of his day.

Attilio's international recognition as an artist may be attested to by his election to one of the most distinguished bodies of artists in the world, the *Insigne Artistica Congregazione Pontificia de' Virtuosi al Pantheon*, Rome. His election occurred in 1903, two years after he had won the commission for the MAINE MEMORIAL MONUMENT. Its membership includes the greatest architects, sculptors and painters of the Renaissance. Its import may be judged by the fact that some of its members, Raffaello Sanzio (1483-1520), for example, was buried in the Roman Pantheon, the seat of this famous society of celebrated artists. Funeral services of deceased members and of members of the House of Savoy may be held in the Pantheon. Attilio himself does not regard this honor as great as his award of the Thomas Jefferson Presidential Medal.

Attilio is one of those men who finds sculpture his best medium of expression. In his long, productive life he has found little time for literary pursuits, consequently, he has not written very much. He has written several not-too-significant articles on art, and some years ago Attilio even started to write his memoirs

but soon abandoned this promising undertaking for his three-dimensional medium. In 1937, however, he was prevailed upon to write an article on stone carving for the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and did it so magnificently that one regrets he did not pursue his literary talents.

CHAPTER IX

Piccirilli's Interest in Art Education — Leonardo da Vinci Art School — His Outstanding Students and Winners of the *Prix de Rome* — Piccirilli the Citizen — Award of the Thomas Jefferson Presidential Medal

Attilio Piccirilli's active, creative life has not prevented him from establishing an enviable record of public service. As a dutiful citizen, he has fulfilled his obligations to his community, despite his participation in the affairs of such organizations as The National Academy, National Sculpture Society, National Arts Club, The Architectural League of New York, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Grand Central Art Galleries, and others. Much of Attilio's time has been devoted to civic and educational matters. He regards his generous contribution of time and money in the public interest as a duty expected of every good citizen to promote the well being of his community. Beside his interest in the foregoing organizations, this public-spirited man has served and still serves, in an advisory capacity, the Board of Education, the High School of Music and Art, the Art Commission, the American Academy in Rome, the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, and other public and private institutions in and out of New York City.

In 1921, together with a group of artists and friends,

Attilio sponsored a unique idea in art education. For many years the Italian-American Art Association had been considering the organization of a new art school to serve those who felt a genuine desire for creative self-expression, regardless of color, creed, or racial origin. These idealistic and far-sighted men, conscious of the artist's obligation to society, conceived and founded a new type of art school offering free instruction to the poor "to give the spirit of these people a chance to bud and blossom and to offer them an opportunity to express themselves artistically." This thought was the motivating inspiration of these men. Thus the Leonardo da Vinci Art School came into being with a high purpose and noble ideals.

Dr. William Norman Guthrie, Rector of the Church of St. Mark's In-The-Bouwerie — Peter Stuyvesant's church — was intensely interested in the plans of the Italian-American Art Association and offered that organization use of a church building, St. Mark's Chapel on East Tenth Street and Stuyvesant Square, to establish the proposed art school.

The founders of the Leonardo da Vinci Art School knew America well. They saw, too, that the foreign born did not always give expression to his valuable cultural heritage once he came to these shores. Individual creation, which develops and nourishes the mind and soul, was lost once the immigrant became part of the complex industrial structure which he found in America. This school encouraged interested men and women, and talented youngsters to explore their finer sentiments and to express their spiritual being for the enrichment of humanity. By cultivating his creative instincts, the wise founders reasoned, every immigrant would have the opportunity of contributing to the cultural development of America.

Some skeptics believed that the East Side was hardly the place for an art school, inhabited as it was by the underprivileged. This was disproven when the Italian-American Art Association held its first art exhibition in the same school building and every work of art was sold before the show closed. Art interest cannot be measured always in terms of a social or economic standard. The art exhibit offered convincing assurance, though none was needed, that the immigrants who populated the East Side tenement districts were not wanting in cultural interests. The founders of the Leonardo were gratified and their belief in the creative usefulness of the immigrant confirmed.

In December, 1923, the Leonardo da Vinci Art School was formally opened and attracted city-wide attention. A faculty of twelve well-known artists, recruited from the Italian-American Art Association, offered instruction without compensation in various fields of art. These men were Attilio Piccirilli, its President; Onorio Ruotolo, its Director; Michele Falanga, Giovanni Caggiano, Fernando Ciavatti, Gaetano Piazza, Cesare Stea, Cesare Soderò, Filippo Marchello, Vincenzo Primavera, Aldo Lazzarini, and the two Mungo brothers, Antonio and Gino. The administrators of the school were ably assisted by Frances Roman (Mrs. F. W. Grebanier), the author. Voluntary contributions made possible the purchase of needed equipment and furniture, and these donations formed the only source of income.

About two hundred students registered for art instruction in the first few months of the school's opening. These consisted chiefly of factory workers, truck drivers, business men and employees, children and adults as well. The youngest student to enroll was a nine-year-old boy recommended by F. H. LaGuardia; the oldest was sixty-two. No requirements were necessary for

matriculation except a desire to work and create. Anyone who expressed this interest was summarily registered and sent immediately to one of the studios to begin his training. The success of this unique experiment was due, in the main, to the absence of any formal or rigid requirements for matriculation, and to the fact that once a student was admitted to the school he enjoyed complete freedom. A declaration of interest to participate in creative work was the only requisite for admission — no other school in the United States admitted students on this basis alone. The wisdom of this philosophy of art education, considering the wide diversity of educational preparation of the student body, is sustained by the successes attained by many students who received their only art training at the Leonardo da Vinci Art School.

When the school transferred to its new quarters on East Thirty-fourth Street, New York City, to accommodate the ever increasing student registration, morning and afternoon classes were scheduled to supplement the evening work. In addition to the expanded art curriculum, a program of adult education was also instituted. Every Saturday, invited lecturers, authorities in their respective fields, addressed large audiences of interested people foregathered in the central hall. Admission was free. After these lectures, many artists, musicians, professional men and literati would linger on in the main lecture hall or the director's office for the discussions on art and other cultural topics which always followed these Saturday meetings. These spirited, informal gatherings will be remembered always by the author. There were those who were unable to attend the Saturday lectures, but who never failed to put in an appearance to listen to the stimulating discourses which took place during the course of the day.

The success of this educational enterprise was due chiefly

to men like Attilio Piccirilli, Onorio Ruotolo, and a large group of friends and artists who made many personal sacrifices in the service of an ideal fully realized. Michele Falanga, painter, contributed much in the formative years of the school. Its principal supporters were Giuseppe Gerli, Fiorello H. LaGuardia, Almerindo Portfolio, Angelo Patri, August Bellanca, Luigi Antonini, Edward Corsi, Joseph Catalanotti, Peter F. Amoroso, Joseph M. Aimee, and there were many others.

The Leonardo da Vinci Art School has served its community well. Unfortunately, the community did not fully appraise its gifts and the opportunities it offered. In the latter part of 1940, the school had to suspend its activities temporarily for it could not meet its operating expenses from the small contributions it received. It is hoped that official recognition and proper financial support will soon restore this school to a community which reaped its full benefits without sharing its responsibilities.

Perhaps the significance of the school's program and objectives can be judged by the testimonials it received from many distinguished men familiar with its magnificent work during its seventeen years of unselfish service to the community. These men included Thomas A. Edison, Theodore Dreiser, Arthur Brisbane, Alfred E. Smith, Arturo Toscanini, Gabriele d'Annunzio, Calvin Coolidge, Sherwood Anderson, James Oppenheim, Luigi Pirandello, Herbert H. Lehman, Thomas E. Dewey, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Eleanor Duse, Corrado Ricci, Giovanni Papini, Giulio Gatti-Casazza, John F. Hylan, Charles Dana Gibson, and many others.

James Oppenheim, the famous writer, said of the Leonardo: "There is nothing greater for America at this time than the infusion of art in all things that are made by the hands. Out

of such a spirit in a nation, beauty reaches up from the common and familiar things until it flowers in those great spiritual works, those poems, paintings, fictions and sculptures, which are the life and breath of a great people. Hence, it is that a school as the Leonardo da Vinci Art School is vitally needed, and should be given every help to make it a creative center of artisanship and art."

At the time of its organization, President Calvin Coolidge wrote: "I wish to express not only my highest appreciation for the fine purposes of the Leonardo da Vinci Art School, but also hope that its efforts may be crowned with a measure of success altogether gratifying to its organizers and students."

From the inception of the Leonardo da Vinci Art School, Attilio served as its President and carried many of its financial burdens. He attended to his duties as instructor of the sculpture class with serious interest, meeting his class regularly every evening from eight to ten. When he was not teaching, Attilio spent his time speaking with students, inspiring them to greater creative effort. He listened to their personal problems with much sympathy and helped those who needed it most. No wonder he endeared himself to students and faculty alike!

Whenever Attilio discovered a promising student—one who showed unusual talent and serious interest in his work—he would invite the young man to work in his own studio, helping him develop his creative instincts under ideal circumstances and under his personal guidance. Many of the younger sculptors today can attribute their success to Attilio's heartening efforts and private tutelage. This was the aspiration of every student enrolled in Attilio's sculpture class at the Leonardo—a chance to work with the sculptor whom the students affectionately called *Maestro*.

Several years ago, to cite a recent case, Attilio became

impressed by the work of a young man, John Gulias, one of his students. His work was mature, and he seemed to understand the plastic medium exceptionally well. Young Gulias attended his evening class regularly and worked with untiring energy. Attilio was convinced that with proper guidance this ambitious student would achieve success and recognition, but he also learned that the young sculptor could ill afford to leave his position, his only source of income, to spend all his time working in the Piccirilli Studio. Attilio was determined to give this young man every opportunity to develop his natural gifts and to provide conditions of work conducive to free creative expression without financial worry. When young Gulias heard that Attilio would allow him twenty-five dollars a week to work in his studio, he was overcome with joy. No one could ask for more ideal conditions. Gulias worked hard, improving as time went on. After several years' training with the generous and hospitable *Maestro*, Gulias entered the annual sculpture competition for the *Prix de Rome*, a coveted award which entitles the winner to two years of resident study at the American Academy in Rome. John Gulias won first prize in the national competition, just as Attilio had predicted, and was awarded the *Prix de Rome*. America's entrance into the war, however, prevented him from going abroad immediately. Attilio's faith in the young man's ability never waned and it was now crowned with the success he had foreseen — John Gulias won success and recognition. Were it not for Attilio's interest and his recognition of the young man's latent ability, skilfully nourished in his studio to bring out its full powers of expression, young Gulias may never have attained his measure of prominence.

John Gulias was not alone, among Attilio's students, to win honors, acclaim and success. Joseph E. Reiner, Percival C.

Dietsch, and Gaetano Cecere were others who received their training in the Piccirilli Studio and who also were winners of the *Prix de Rome*. Gaetano Cecere (1894-) is probably his most prominent pupil.

A revealing insight into Piccirilli's character may be gleaned by his association with and interest in a physically handicapped youth who had been referred to him by the New York City Board of Education. From the time the Leonardo da Vinci Art School suspended its educational program several years ago, Attilio has been spending many evenings at the home of Joseph J. Neri, a bedridden invalid. When Attilio first met him, the twenty-three-year old man had no desire to live. His life seemed futile and his existence useless. Death appeared to be ever so welcome. Fortunately, this is all changed now. Attilio made young Neri see the beauty and vigor of life and the power of self-expression. Neri began to emerge slowly from his psychological conflict and became less morbid. He responded to Attilio's sympathetic guidance and spiritual encouragement. Attilio urged him to forget his affliction, assuring the young man that if he possessed moral strength he would rise above his misfortune as other men had done. Neri began to understand. Yes, he had moral courage and ability, too.

Attilio provided Neri with the necessary tools and material and persuaded him to create. Today, the young sculptor has no time to be despondent. He has found salvation and happiness in his work and Attilio predicts a successful future for him. "He shows exceptional skill in portraiture and has a keen sense of plastic design," says Attilio. One can feel Attilio's attachment to the young man by the enthusiasm with which he speaks of him. Neri is no longer wasting his life, but is developing into a good sculptor

and an effective writer—Neri has written several novels. Attilio has offered the young man and his family financial assistance, which they politely refused. "If Neri had proper financial support, but not charity, he would make a huge success of his life. This boy has ability and great potentialities. All he needs is a little encouragement from time to time." The Board of Education is deeply grateful to Attilio for his help in rehabilitating a useful citizen who undoubtedly will make his own worthwhile contribution to society. It makes Attilio very happy to help others, and these experiences are cherished as much by him as they are by his beneficiaries. Attilio remembers his "greatest satisfaction came not as a benefactor, but as a beneficiary"—referring to the time when the Thomas Jefferson Presidential Medal was conferred upon him.

Piccirilli's pride in his American citizenship undoubtedly explains his effusiveness whenever he relates how he became the recipient of the Thomas Jefferson Presidential Medal. He regards this award as the greatest honor bestowed upon him in his life, because it signifies that his citizenship was given due recognition by fellow Americans.

While the freighter "New England" was lazily making its way through the choppy waters of the Atlantic on its journey to New York, Piccirilli spent his leisure time thinking about this wonderful land. Even before the freighter reached these shores he had made up his mind to become a good, substantial American, and never once veered from this resolution in the fifty-six years he has been here. When he arrived on the spring morning of April 16, 1888, he went from the pier in Battery Park directly to the Federal Building, where he declared his intention to become a citizen. A clerk who had inquired when the young sculptor had

arrived in America, looked startled at the applicant upon hearing him say, "A few minutes ago on the 'New England.'" He did not linger one moment once he set foot on American soil, to achieve what he previously had planned. Not even his enthusiastic curiosity of the new world delayed him. On October 14, 1892, Piccirilli received his certificate of American citizenship. He regards its acquisition as his first outstanding accomplishment in America, and no other event in a successful and colorful life has overshadowed its importance. Proud and ecstatically happy, the possession of this certificate imbued him with the feeling of really belonging to this country. Piccirilli has never quite forgotten the delight and gladness he first felt in his heart at being called an American.

Theodore Fred Kuper, President of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, the society which nominates candidates for the Presidential Medal, in a letter to Governor John Garland Pollard of Virginia, wrote: "Whenever we meet his type we find the sharp contrast between the native, who accepts the gifts that he has inherited from the founders of our Republic almost without appreciation; and on the other hand the Piccirilli type, that longingly sought the shores of America and found a haven here with all the sacrifices that attend the transplantation from the land of birth into the midst of a new land and a new people. It is an inspiration for every native American to note the sincere gratitude, appreciation and zeal with which men of the Piccirilli type regard the land and the ideals which they adopted when they came here and acquired American citizenship." This letter was written October 17, 1932.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation chose to honor a man who embraced the

ideals of Thomas Jefferson and who regards his American citizenship with such seriousness and devotion. On October 22, 1932, Piccirilli received the Thomas Jefferson Presidential Medal in recognition of his contribution to art, education and citizenship. The medal was presented to him by Governor John Garland Pollard of Virginia at ceremonies held in the hall of the Board of Education in New York City. Many distinguished guests were present, including Ambassador Claude G. Bowers, the Royal Italian Ambassador, His Excellency Giacomo de Martino; Dr. George J. Ryan, President of the Board of Education; Representative F. H. LaGuardia, and many others. In presenting the medal, Governor Pollard read the following citation:

“There are three reasons why we hold you in high esteem. We esteem Piccirilli, the Italian; we esteem Piccirilli, the artist; and we love Piccirilli, the American citizen. Someone said that this country does not suffer from bad citizens but rather from the bad citizenship of so-called good citizens. We present this medal to you not as an Italian, nor as an artist, but as a good citizen.”

Representative LaGuardia was the last speaker and concluded his remarks with the following words: “Piccirilli has carved the memory of that great statesman in stone. Let us all carry on the ideals of Thomas Jefferson and, as Piccirilli has so ably perpetuated his image in stone, let us rededicate ourselves to the teachings and principles of Thomas Jefferson, so that they may continue in the hearts of all Americans.”

At the age of seventy-eight, Attilio is vigorous of mind

and body, possessing a fresh, youthful enthusiasm for his work and many civic interests. This man of generous impulses and noble spirit spends his time in the service of his art and fellow man. No one could ask more of man.

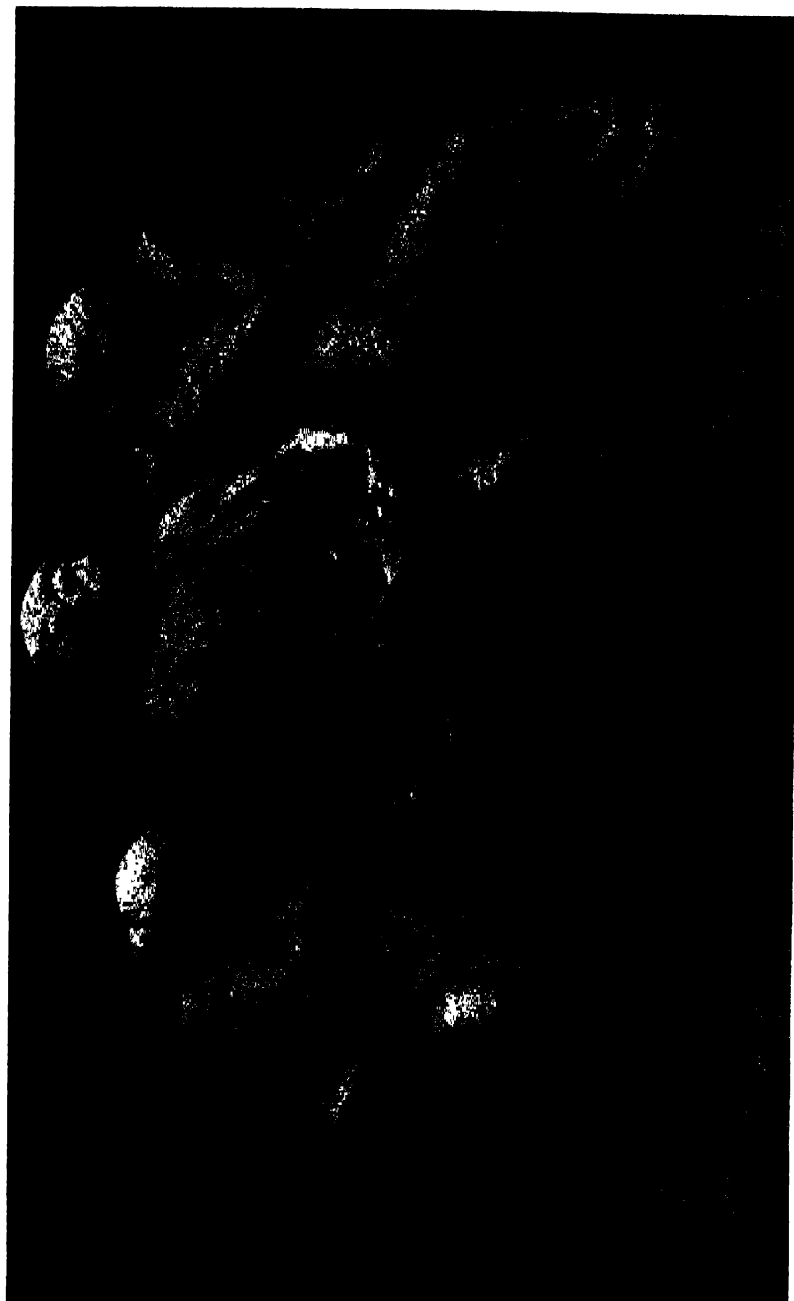


PLATE 53

Wisconsin State Capitol Building, Madison, Wisconsin

AGRICULTURE

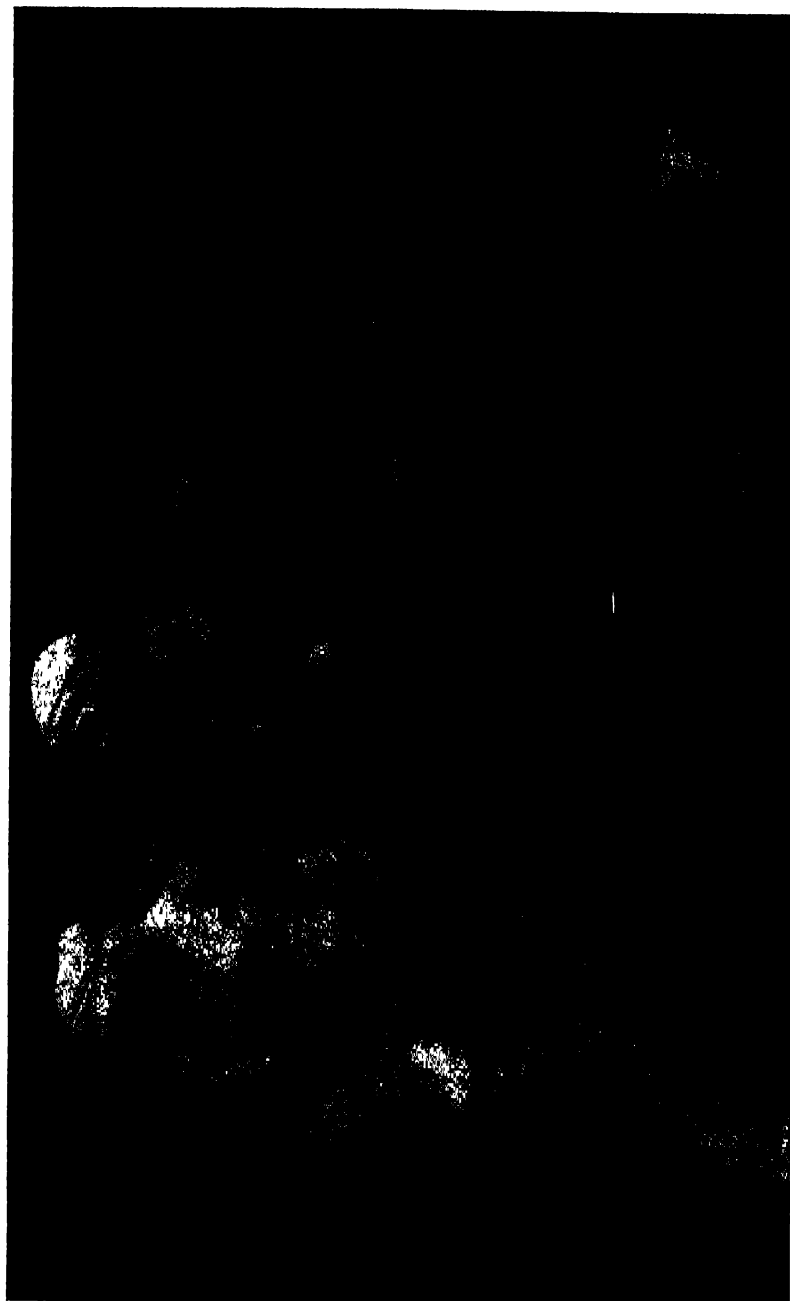


PLATE 55

Wisconsin State Capitol Building, Madison, Wisconsin

SCIENCE

CHAPTER X

AESTHETIC AND STYLISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

Piccirilli's Modern-classic Style — Philosophy of Art — The Psychology Underlying the Observer's Participation in the Expressed Mood of a Statue — Portrayal of Human Emotions — The Outcast — Interpretation of the Body Never Literal — Character of Public Monuments — Quality of Noncommissioned Work — Respect for Intrinsic Quality of Medium — Representation of Motion Psychology — Figures of Public Monuments Universal Personifications — Subjective Conception of Noncommissioned Figures — *Fragelina* — Preference for the Nude Female Figure — Use of *Contrapposto* — *Spring Dream* — Treatment of Surface Textures — Master of Line — Monumentality Enhanced by Compactness of Sculptural Composition — *Portraiture* — *Iole* — Recapitulation — Representative Art

Atulio Piccirilli's art is both modern and classic in concept. Classical antiquity has made its impression, to be sure, but the spirit of his work remains peculiarly and inherently individual. Just as the Greeks borrowed from Assyrian, Persian, Egyptian and other Oriental civilizations to create their own distinctive art, Piccirilli studied Greek and Renaissance culture to produce a personal art, original in its inspiration and aesthetically elegant. A

strong trace of the contemporary trend in sculpture—a trend Piccirilli anticipated by many years—with its severe generalization of form and its emphasis on the broader aspects of mass, line and design, may be found particularly in his noncommissioned work, such as, *FRAGELINA* (Plates 38, 39), *SPRING DREAM* (Plate 58), *YOUNG VIRGIN* (Plate 62), *STUDY OF A WOMAN* (Plates 74, 75A). What the sculptor bars from his art is the displeasing, arbitrary distortion and stylization of the human body with poorly distributed and ill-proportioned masses of some contemporary sculptors who lack feeling for fundamental form. “Contemporary sculpture,” the artist believes, “is appealing and appreciated for its abstract beauty alone. That method of representation, however, is not satisfying because the art form is incomplete due to the apparent division of matter and content.” Purely abstract qualities should not be divorced from the intellectual and emotional substance of a statue. Organization of plastic elements in a sculptural design should not preclude the embodiment of ideas in that design for greater aesthetic expressiveness. Piccirilli does not accept the theory that the intensity of abstract beauty in a statue is lessened by the inclusion of ideas which stimulate aesthetic pleasure. Rivalry of aesthetic factors is possible only in mediocre hands. There is no reason why these factors cannot be harmoniously synchronized to heighten the impact of beauty which a statue may evoke.

Whether he is working in the quasi-classic manner of his public monuments, or in the conventionalized, modern-classic style of his noncommissioned work, Piccirilli’s creations are always unique and reveal a consistent instinct for the beautiful. His conceptions are never subservient to his unerring technique and extraordinary mastery of technical skill—he never confuses

skill, which is not art, with expression. To him the idea or thought motivating his art is vastly more important than the technique by which he expresses it in objective form.

Piccirilli's creative process assumes the pattern of a carefully selective, inventive, and highly interpretative mechanism, for the rendition and attainment of beautiful sculptural form. Initiated in the seat of the imagination, a creative impulse or inspiration, undefined and meaningless in its spontaneous beginning, finds expression in an intellectual and tangible form after it has been rationalized by the artist. Only then is it finally resolved and interpreted according to the artist's own aesthetic sensibilities and creative instincts. An artist's vision of an idea may be conceived intuitively, but when this emotional drive or excitement asserts itself configuratively, it passes from the intuitive to the rational stage.

Recreation of an inspired thought or impulse in terms of a three-dimensional, orderly design, depends upon the mental processes. A work of art thus becomes a consummation of both emotional and intellectual factors. Piccirilli is keenly aware of the psychological structure underlying the creative process, and he feels that every work of art should animate the observer and awaken in him a new experience. Every sculpture, to Piccirilli, is a corporeal illustration of an idea of beauty capable of arousing aesthetic sensations in the observer. This physical transcription in stone is always a source of contentment inasmuch as the transmutation of abstract thought to concrete expression is the realization of the creator's dream.

Appreciation of Piccirilli's sculpture is further enhanced by the observer's response to the sensations of joy and sorrow, sight and touch, suggested motion and rest, and the feeling of

apathy and anxiety. Thus the observer feels the actual experience of responding to parallel sensations suggested by the statue. Every one of his statues emits strong visual and tactile sensations, and the plastic quality of sculpture cannot be fully appreciated without the integration of these two sensations. Retinal impressions created by the sculptural stimulus are essentially two-dimensional, and when these impressions are transmitted to the brain they are transformed in terms of three-dimensional experiences. This coordinated reaction is involuntary and enables the observer to understand the sculptural form perceived in space, bringing the experience within his comprehension. The touching process is not one physically carried out, but one which occurs in the imagination. Piccirilli's statues awaken tactile responses which are convincingly real.

Ideas, moods or thoughts are never represented as complete messages in Piccirilli's statues. When a statue tells its story inclusively, the observer is inclined to look on objectively, as the statue provides no opportunity for him to implement what he perceives. In good sculpture, the spectator should be made to participate in the expressed mood whether he is consciously aware of it or not. Piccirilli never defines a mood so precisely as to discourage or preclude active participation on the part of the spectator. This is particularly true of his noncommissioned work. Portrayal of emotions, for instance, is vaguely suggested, thereby evoking the quick response of the observer who instinctively strengthens the expression of the statue by supplementing it with his own personal experience. In this manner, the observer finds himself, sometimes unknowingly, in complete and satisfying conversation with the emotional content of the statue. The more spontaneous and penetrating the observer's response to the statue, the quicker will he

comprehend and appreciate the spiritual inner life of the subject. To illustrate how the sculptor transmits the feeling of emotion embodied in a statue to the observer, the reader need only consider the heroic nude, the OUTCAST (Plates 47, 48), in the Church of St. Mark's In-The-Bouwerie, City of New York.

Dynamic in concept, the OUTCAST is a fine representation of the overpowering emotions which befall man, leaving him in a state of mental and physical collapse. This disconsolate figure presents a sorrowful attitude of grief and despair. Yet, in spite of his affliction, his behavior is not one of violence. In this statue, Piccirilli creates an even stronger impression in the observer's mind; he is made to feel the far-reaching effects, implicitly expressed, which attend such suffering. The huge nude stimulates the observer's consciousness, inducing him to interpret its mood in terms of previous experiences arising from unhappiness. In this manner he reinforces the statue's expression by his own. Observe the tragic figure for a few moments to feel its pathos, and the experience will arouse a parallel reaction. As a result, a psychological contact between the observer and the spiritual inner life of the statue is consummated. This characterization offers convincing evidence of the sculptor's understanding of content and substance as expressed through matter, subject, and treatment.

Emotion in Piccirilli's statues is always quietly subdued and described with dignity and restraint; it is never excessive nor ungoverned. Particularly in his noncommissioned work, emotion, when registered through facial expression, is reduced to bare essentials by the subtle modeling of the face. All human passions can be adequately portrayed through the medium of the face. When this practice prevails, however, the attention of the observer is invariably brought to bear upon the face, with the

resultant mental segregation of the head and body. In such instances, the artist calls undue attention to the face thereby disrupting the unity of the whole body. As Piccirilli interprets the human body, it possesses not only emotional content, but abstract beauty as well. Whatever feeling or sentiment is expressed by the face is transmitted through the entire musculature of the body, becoming, as it were, an inseparable and indivisible part of its abstract beauty.

Piccirilli does not conceive the human body as a simple documentation composed of head, torso, and limbs. To him the body is a beautifully engendered unit, every part of which is instilled with the same spiritual feeling. "Emotion is not possible of isolation," says Piccirilli. "In good sculpture it is never concentrated in the head alone, the center of human passions, but should manifest itself through the bone and muscle structure of the body."

Piccirilli's art is predicated on the beauty of the human body, not in any precise realism or uninventive naturalism, but in the beauty of a more important idealization which complements his conventionalized creations. According to the sculptor, "Accurate portrayal of the human body, devoid of individualized life and thought, is not art." A statue should not be a true image of nature, but a symbol of nature through which the artist transmits his inner feelings to the outside world. If a statue is not impregnated with a communicable idea or provocative thought — if its mood and aesthetic exhilaration are not felt by the observer, it cannot be considered good art. An observer, moreover, should not only participate in the expressed mood and suggested action of a statue, but he should be induced to carry that mood and action to its logical conclusion.

In Greek sculpture, the features of the face show a generalized, though not a lifeless, expression; mood, thought, dignity, nobility, and the like, are demonstrated through the movement and arrangement of the figure. There is no cleavage or line of demarcation between body and soul. So it is with the sculpture of Piccirilli.

"Stone immortalizes the artist's greatest dreams," writes Piccirilli in an article on sculpture in the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. To insure this function of immortalization, stone must never suffer any violation. Its intrinsic characteristics and beauty must be rigidly respected. Stone is an inert, inanimate, hard and durable substance, and Piccirilli never attempts to disguise its character by rendering it brittle or translucent. A block of stone or marble can be whittled down until it becomes so fragile that its permanency is completely sacrificed.

When action is depicted, as in the figures of the DANCING FAUN (Plates 7, 8) and THE WAVE (Plates 70, 71), care is taken not to present it as actual movement, although the observer will understand it as such in his own mind. Motion is suggested or arrested; it remains latent and can be set into action only by the observer. Knotty muscles and dilated arteries indicating physical exertion or muscular activity are avoided. When represented for reasons of necessity, they are carefully subdued. Muscular strain produced by violent action has no aesthetic *raison d'être* and is consequently eliminated.

Piccirilli's sculpture may be divided into two categories of style and execution, namely public monuments and noncommissioned sculpture. A casual analysis, from purely external appearances, of the two types of sculpture might lead one to suspect the work of two different artists. At first glance, an apparent

antithesis of style and execution is noticed, but when the substance of each statue is carefully noted, this sense of antithesis gradually gives way to realization of a single authorship. A poetic and intellectual fiber is discovered which underlies all Piccirilli's sculpture. There is a philosophic sameness, which stems from one creator, which is inescapable in his statues, both public and private.

In his public monuments, the sculptor attempts characterizations of ideal types or universal personifications, in which he strives to embody that which is everlasting and noble. In public monuments, the artist's preoccupation is with the expression of collective thought and taste. The artist is faced with the problem of restricting himself to generalized types and conceptions comprehensible to everyone. Public monuments showing emotions or preferences too clearly allied with the artist, are, by their very nature, not fully appreciated by a public with vastly divergent intellectual and emotional capacities. Unless the subject of the monument is within the grasp and experience of the majority, such as a mother-and-child theme, the sculptor does well perhaps not to express himself too personally. Because the sculptor understands this distinction so well, a marked stylistic difference is noticeable between his public and the simply stated organizations of his noncommissioned sculpture.

In this noncommissioned sculpture — sculpture conceived to satisfy the artist's own pleasure and creative impulses — is found a peculiar intellectual and abstract quality lacking in most of his public monuments. His noncommissioned conceptions are extremely simple in outline and purity of form. The figures themselves appear to emerge from their simple geometric solids. A severe elimination of superfluous detail and surface decoration provides a beauty of line and contour which is compelling for its

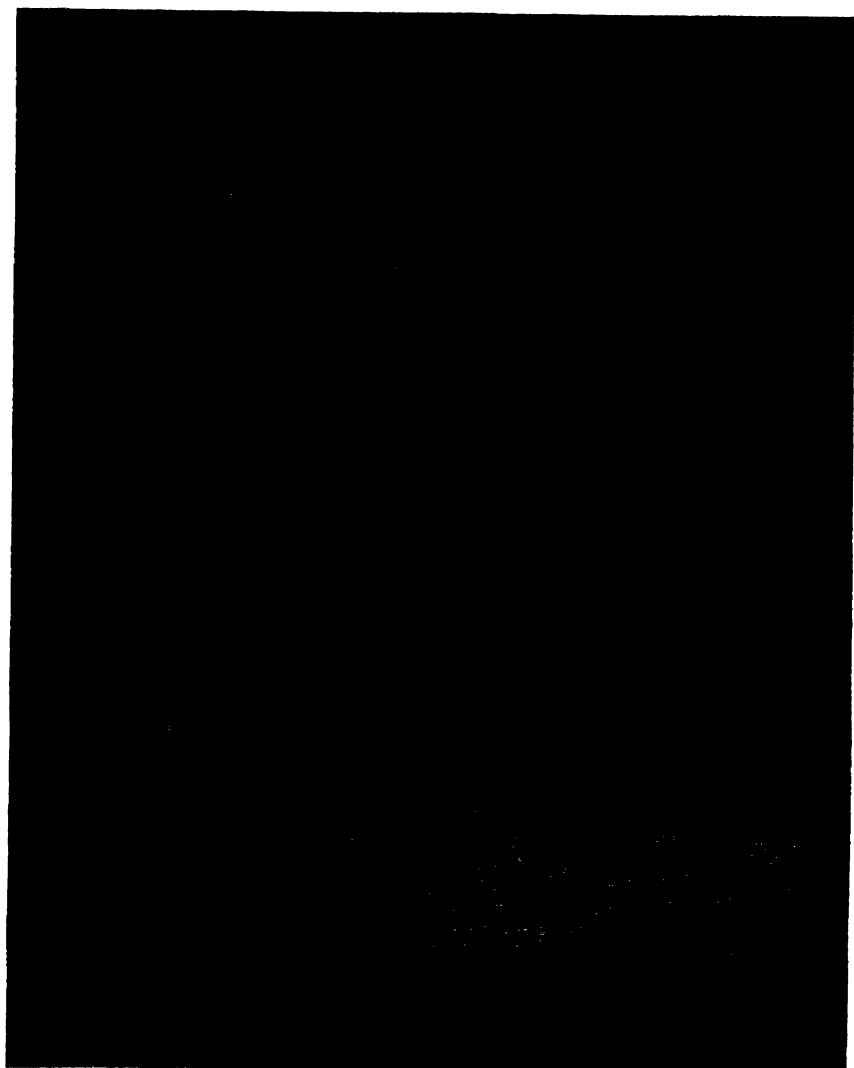


PLATE 56

Collection of The National Academy, N Y

BROKEN VASE.



Piccirilli at Work

SPRING DREAM

PLATE 57



PLATE 58

Richmond Academy of Sciences and Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia

SPRING DREAM



PLATE 59

Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia

SPIRIT OF YOUTH



PLATE 60

Collection of F H LaGuardia, N Y

FIRST STEP



PLATE 61

Woodlawn Cemetery, New York

LA GUARDIA GRAVE MEMORIAL

sheer simplicity. Certain abstract qualities of the body are chosen for prominence to accent the formal meaning of mass. By prudently determining the physical disposition of the body and its planned distortion beforehand, Piccirilli is able to achieve his desired artistic effect. Detail not directly related to the principal form is fearlessly discarded to preserve purity. His many beautiful female nudes are briefly stated essays in aesthetics.

Beauty in his noncommissioned nudes does not depend upon external, surface prettiness. Beauty is expressed by a pre-determination of the nude composed of a network of rhythmic curves, whose origins and insertions cannot be found, which serve to describe the formal mass structure of the body. These curves carry the eye pleasingly from surface to plane to contour and back again in an unending movement. Similarly, the design of the anatomical architecture and the severity of the generalized features are intended to focus attention on the action of the body through which Piccirilli expresses himself. The faces of his female nudes have been stripped of every vestige of representative beauty in behalf of a beauty based upon an abstract formula. This is shown in his figures of *FRAGELINA* (Plates 38, 39), *SPRING DREAM* (Plate 58), *YOUNG VIRGIN* (Plate 62), *TWILIGHT* (Plate 49), and others. Moreover, in all his female nudes, the hair is generally treated as a single mass drawn tightly over the ears and gathered at the nape of the neck to strengthen the roundness of the head.

A typical example of this individualized style — a style unencumbered by the limitations and restrictions ordinarily imposed upon the artist by public commissions — is the statue *FRAGELINA* (Plates 38, 39), in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Devoid of marked feeling, the face shows no trace of time. A strange, indefinable meaning is concealed behind

vague, lidless eyes which are mere impressions formed by softly diffused shadows. Whatever thought occupies the nude is screened behind the mysterious guise of dreamy, colorless eyes. The sensitive and indefinite modeling of the broad cheeks, the delicate lips, rather wide mouth, and the undefined nose, is compatible with the preconceived severity of the face. In this figure, the continuity of line is accomplished with utmost simplicity and its elegant beauty is based upon a symphony of line and contours. The function and purpose of the generalized, almost harsh, features are explained by the artist. "Every person has his own ideal of beauty stored away in his subconscious mind. When facial characteristics are precisely delineated, the observer is denied the opportunity of personally visualizing his ideal type. This reaction frequently takes place without full realization." It is to invite adequate and satisfying expression, aside from the desire to conform to the dictates of good design, that the artist creates such indefinable types of irresistible charm.

In noncommissioned productions a distinct preference is shown for the undraped female nude, usually represented in a seated position. But, whether they are standing or at rest, the nudes very rarely assume a wholly frontal position. Frontality, with its inherent awkwardness and posed-like attitude, is avoided in favor of a form of *contrapposto* which, by its many ingenious variations, enhances the interest of the forms and compositions. By *contrapposto* is meant the skillful contrasting and opposition of masses, making possible the implied movement suggested by a statue. In these female nudes, the head, either partially raised or inclined, is generally turned to one side, while the torso and limbs are shown in contrasting or opposing position.

How *contrapposto* can be used to enhance the effective-

ness of a design is cleverly shown in the seated nude **SPRING DREAM** (Plate 58), in the museum of the Academy of Sciences and Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia. Seated informally upon her two shapely legs, the figure strikes an attitude which escorts the observer around the statue. The direction of the figure, rotating about an imaginary line or axis, moves in a line originating at the head and continues clockwise through the torso, turned slightly on the hips, finally terminating at the knees. Or, describing the ascent of the line from the knees to the head, the line moves obliquely into the picture plane or cavity formed by the figure, then changes its course to rise through the lower part of the torso. Continuing its ascent, the line passes through the nape of the neck and ultimately outward to terminate at the head. Description of the line as given is visualized as occurring in a two-dimensional plane. Actually, however, the directional line moves in space. In **SPRING DREAM**, as in every statue, *contrapposto* is not really achieved in terms of line, which at best denotes direction or movement, but in terms of integrated masses, juxtaposed and in opposition, describing rhythmic movement and direction in space. The use of *contrapposto* by Piccirilli, unlike that of Michelangelo which reveals the inner turbulence of a struggling soul, shows a tranquility and calm which is eloquent in its expression and soothing in its restfulness.

Unlike his public monuments, where surfaces remain characteristically coarse in texture, a different treatment obtains in his idealistic nudes. Textures of his noncommissioned work show a greater refinement, first, because a white marble of close grain is generally used, and second, because the very nature of the female form requires greater delicacy of surface treatment. In his personal art, surface textures are sensuous, but there is no desire to

simulate the human skin. Radiant, ever diffusing light rebounds from these surfaces to produce an atmosphere of mystery and intrigue. No attempt is made to emulate life, however, although all Piccirilli's marbles are imbued with a living quality, at the same time preserving the characteristic beauty of his material.

In these private productions, figures are cut into marble with little more than a detailed generalization. Only broad surfaces of the body are indicated—these are treated with a subtlety growing out of a sympathetic feeling and understanding of significant form. Nuances of light-and-shade are reduced to an absolute minimum with the result that the beauty of the rhythmic contours and masses is brought out in magnificent relief to create a greater consciousness of three-dimensional quality. This is beautifully illustrated in the *OUTCAST* (Plates 47, 48), *FLOWER OF THE ALPS* (Plate 50), and particularly in the *STUDY OF A WOMAN* (Plates 74, 75A).

In public figures the modeling is strong and vigorous, with many interesting patterns of light-and-shade created to enliven the sculptural forms. Features are clearly defined—the eyes are usually set well beneath the brow which casts deep shadows to produce dramatic effects. In noncommissioned figures, the depression of the lidless eyes below the brow is exceedingly slight.

Granite, stone or gray marble is used for public monuments as such media are better suited to outdoor exposure. Almost every piece of noncommissioned sculpture is carved from white Carrara marble which is more appropriate for indoor exposition because it silhouettes well against any background, and because it is better adapted to artificial lighting. White marble has an inescapable coldness which the sculptor neutralizes by firing its cold mass with the warmth of vibrant life. Since the artist must depend

upon light for the effect he wishes to create, white marble can be used most effectively. It reflects natural or artificial light more easily than gray marble which has a tendency to absorb light rays. The effect produced indoors by gray marble is not always cheerful, but it is superbly suited to outdoors where the sunlight is stronger, and also because gray marble is less apt to show discolorations caused by rain and snow. Technical considerations are seemingly unimportant, but their proper evaluation beforehand contributes materially to the aesthetic character of the final production.

In portraiture, only those physical characteristics are interpreted which best typify a person and give an insight into his personality. A feeling of the person's being, describing his physical, moral and emotional attributes, is what the sculptor strives to imprison within a portrait bust. Objective likeness depends more on technical ability than creative skill, therefore, it is subordinated to the more significant qualities of personality. A portrait bust should be a manifestation of life, or a brief statement in stone presenting a satisfying account of a person without too many physical details.

Piccirilli's skill in portraiture was evident at an early age, and his many magnificent portraits attest to this unusual skill. His style appears fullgrown at its inception, as demonstrated by his sensitive portrait of his sister IOLE (Plate 5), when she was only three-years old. The charm and tenderness of adolescence is sympathetically stated in this plaster head. Her head is turned gently to one side, revealing a timidity and shyness which is universal among young children. Her large, colorful eyes are idealized and disclose an awareness and curiosity which is distinctly child-like. The features are delicately treated and the face stands out against

a background of nicely arranged hair which frames the face to give it a proper setting. In this portrait head the artist has not only depicted the daintiness of a younger sister, but he has equally externalized the tender innocence characteristic of all children.

RECAPITULATION

For an appreciation of Piccirilli's style it is important for the reader to understand the artist's philosophy and purpose of art as manifested in his creative efforts. His belief in the exalted beauty of the body as a sculptural form is established in every statue—its orderly, predetermined composition of its three-dimensional structure is responsible for the recurring sensations of aesthetic pleasure aroused in the spectator. To Piccirilli the body is a symbol of living matter subject to the artist's personal interpretation, but not necessarily conceived in terms of an affected or artificial realism. Sculptural meaning is expressed through the organization of the abstract elements of line, surface and volume, which collectively make up the architecture of the design. Through the medium of these abstract elements, any idea can be given expression without resorting to an inartistic deformation of the body's morphology in search of a new pattern of universal beauty. The artist transmits his message to the world through

these plastic attributes of form, which may be properly regarded as an objective record of the artist's experience.

There are not too many examples of contemporary sculpture, conceived with the majestic simplicity of Piccirilli's exquisite female nudes, which preserve their representational qualities. Simplicity in Piccirilli's sculpture is based upon purity of form, and its significance is made communicable, not by what is represented, but by what has been carefully omitted. Abstract beauty may be difficult to attain within the framework of the human body without changing its character too radically, but Piccirilli shows that it can be done. His sculpture lacks confusion and ambiguity, consequently, it is comprehensible to all.

Life and movement are always depicted in harmony with the prevailing idea or thought. Nothing seems extraneous as every part performs its intended function and contributes to the unity of the whole. Relevancy and coherence are qualities too essential not to be recognized and respected. No part can be removed from Piccirilli's compositions without disrupting its total unity and equilibrium.

All his art reflects that consuming passion to attain perpetual beauty, universal and profound in meaning, through which joy and happiness can be spread to all people. Piccirilli's beautiful sculptures are eternal, and represent an imperishable contribution to life's enrichment.

Representative art implies a presentation of objects or nature in comprehensible and recognizable form. Representative or imitative art may be naturalistic, realistic or idealistic, depending upon the artist's intention and interpretation. It is not necessarily a mere documentation of external facts, nor a literal translation of an object. Representative art is not a theory, but a

method of representation — in design form, it is capable of transmitting every conceivable aesthetic sensation. It is not to be confused with academism in which representative forms, devoid of spiritual manifestation and originality, adhere blindly to factual characteristics. Representative art may be academic and unimaginative, but it need not be.

Because the sterile productions of academic painters and sculptors, whose sole forte is technical competence and an anxiety to simulate reality, are composed of representative forms, many invariably associate academism with representative art and condemn all such forms. Representative art is not unworthy in itself, nor should the more important aspects of design be ignored because a painting contains imitative objects. Good or bad art is not determined by a critical consideration of representative or non-imitative factors alone. There are other qualities and elements in a work of art which are far more significant and have greater aesthetic implications. In Piccirilli's art, for instance, one must look beyond objective form to enjoy the poetic beauty and philosophic thought and exhilaration which otherwise would remain unexplored and unassimilated. Whether art is representative or not, it cannot be isolated from its spiritual fibre, nor from the purely abstract qualities of design inherent in art. Sculptural form, be it realistic, naturalistic or abstract, is relatively unimportant in contrast to the more vital aspects of substance and design. Aesthetic criticism rising from personal odium for naturalistic forms as such is without value and indefensible. When representative art has no further implication other than a declaration or exposition of external matter, when it is aesthetically meaningless, vacuous in content and artificial in appearance, then it can be condemned justifiably. Appreciation of any art form or style is

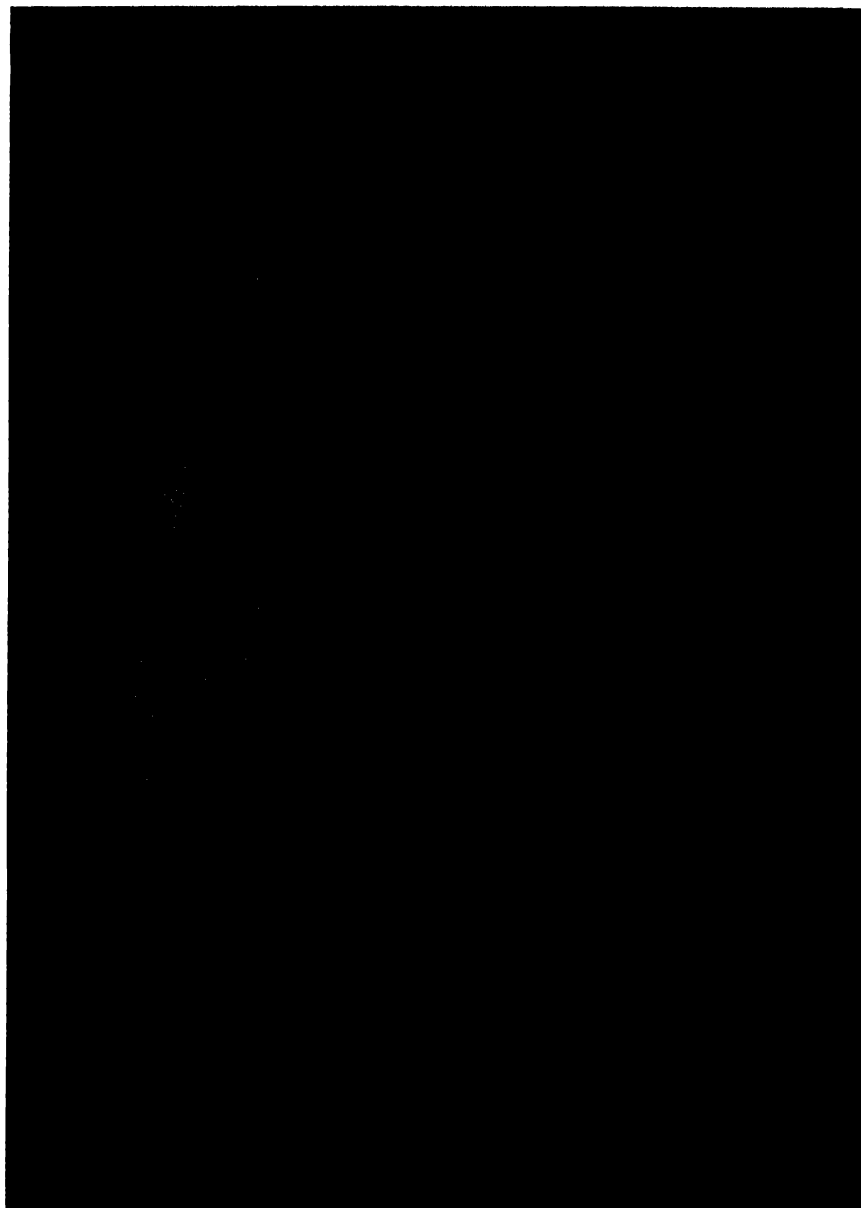


PLATE 62

Collection of R M Blair, Richmond, Va

YOUNG VIRGIN

[355]



Albany, New York

MOTHERS' WAR MEMORIAL

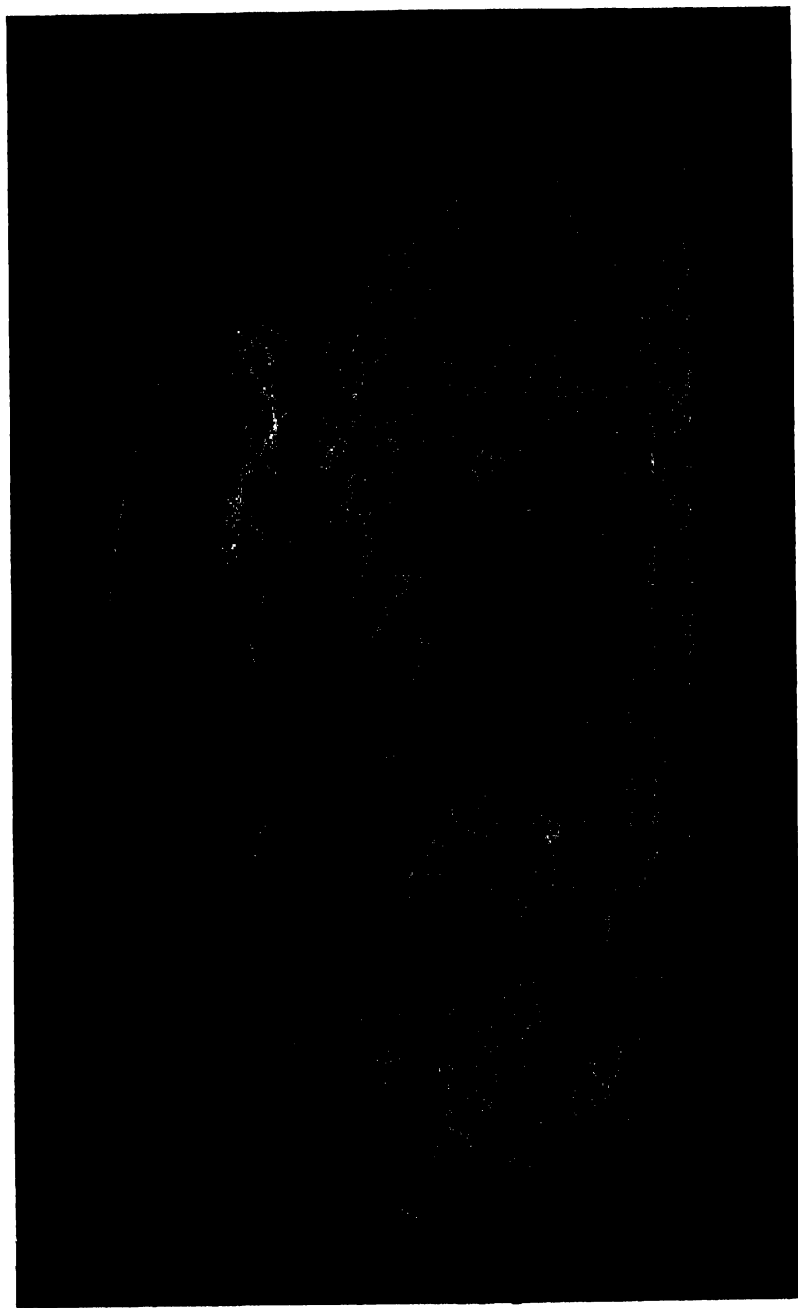
PLATE 63



PLATE 64

Angelo Patri Estate, Adirondack Mountains, N Y

FAUN PLAYING WITH A SQUIRREL



Lobby, Fidelity-Philadelphia Trust Company

PROTECTION

PLATE 65

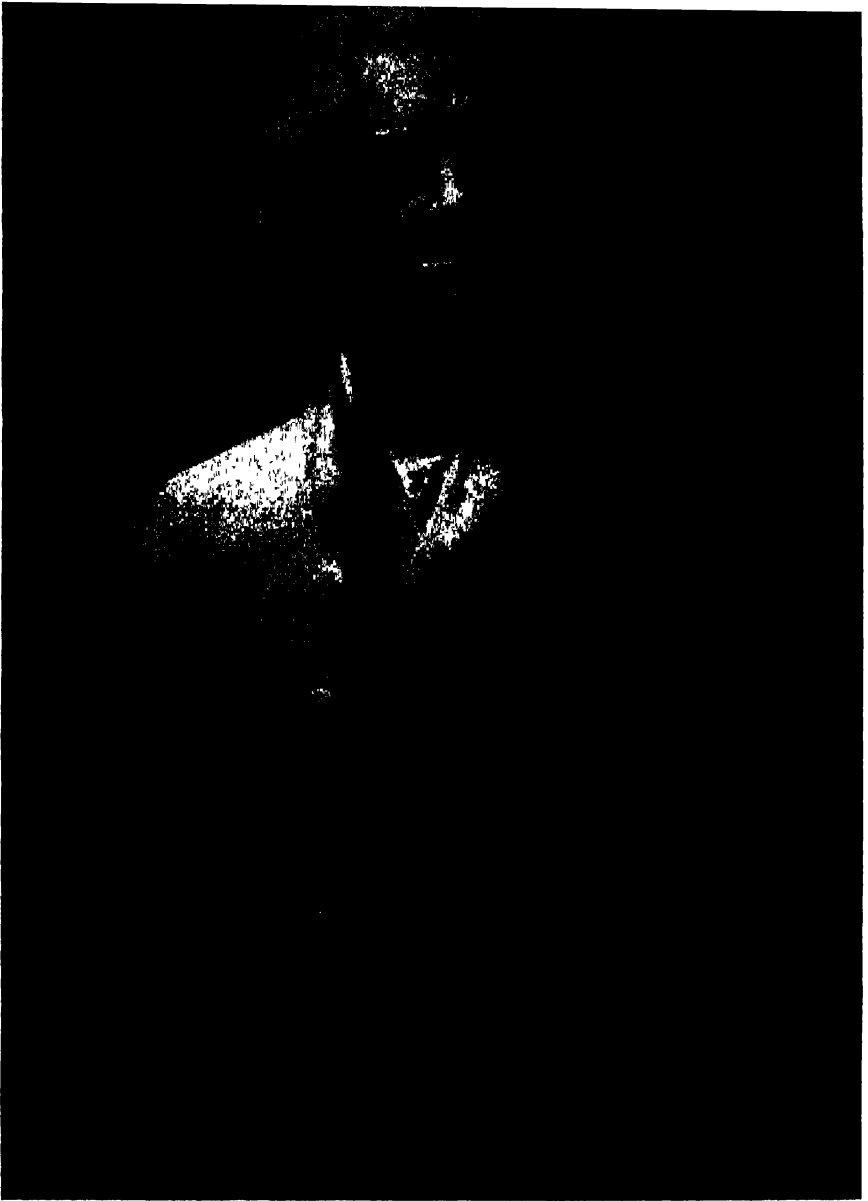


PLATE 66

State Capitol Building, Richmond, Va

THOMAS JEFFERSON



PLATE 67

State Capitol Building, Richmond, Va.

JAMES MONROE

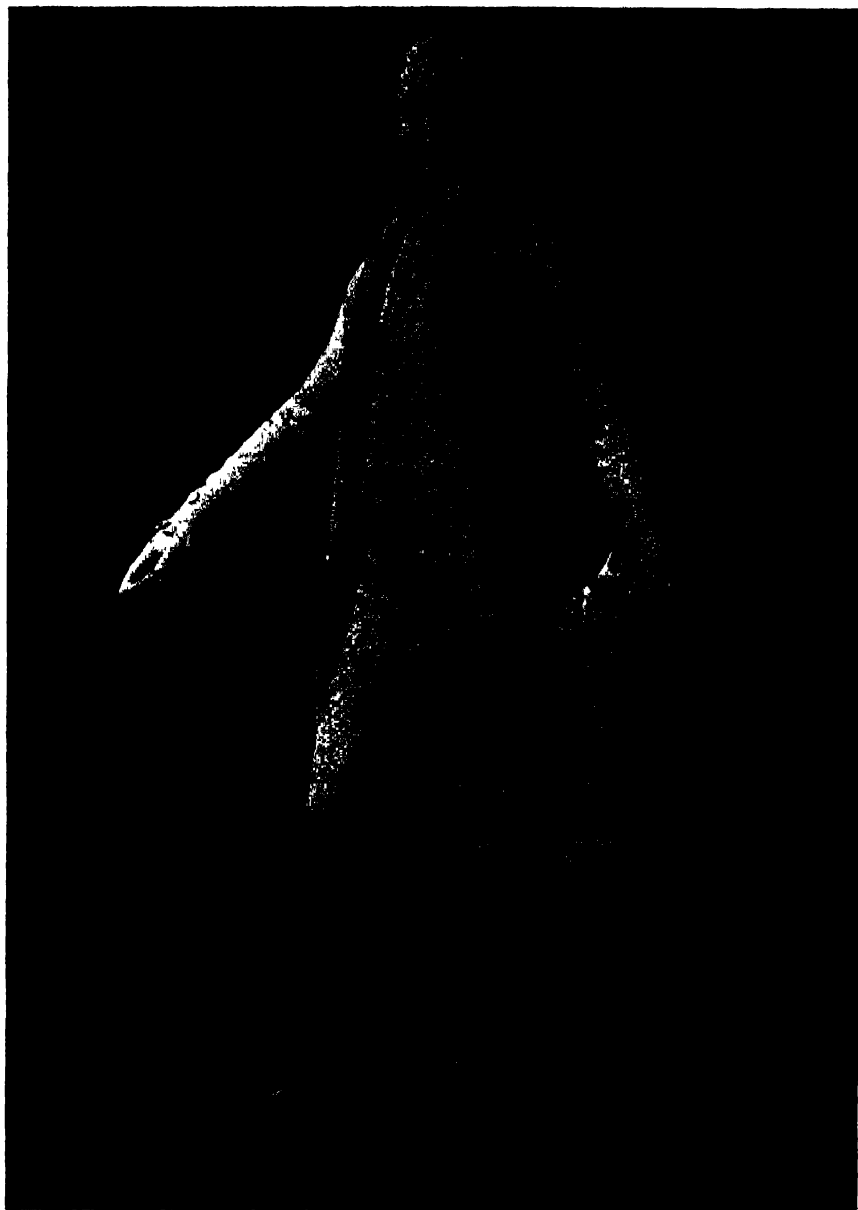


PLATE 68

Ash Lawn, Estate of James Monroe, Near Charlottesville, Va

JAMES MONROE

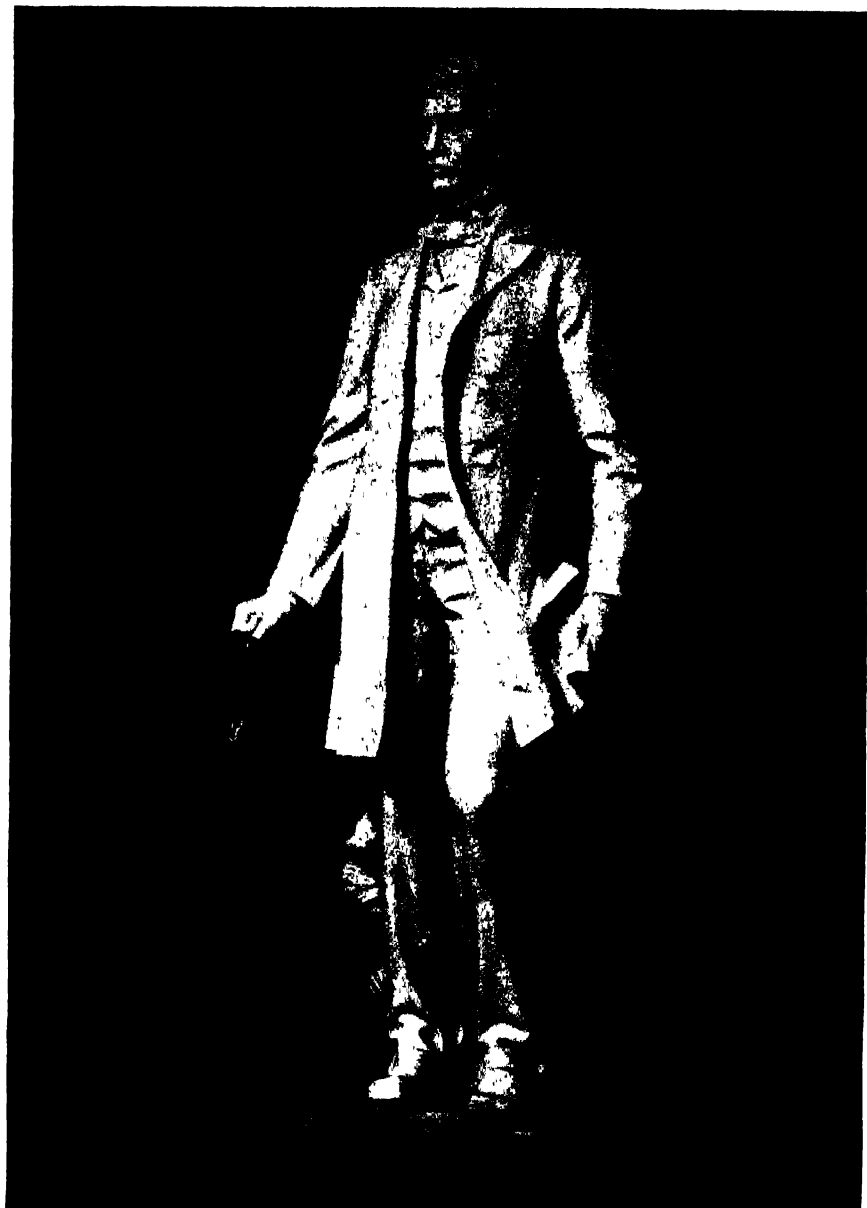


PLATE 69

State Capitol Building, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

HENRY WATKINS ALLEN

measured in terms of how well the artist accomplishes or fulfills his original purpose. Art cannot be appraised objectively by the prejudices of firmly and dogmatically held doctrines.

Art is composed of a group of organically engendered elements arranged according to a schematic pattern called design. The aesthetic effect the artist desires to produce depends upon the observer's reaction or response to the creator's design seen as a single entity. When certain elements in a design are singled out for criticism because of their affinity to the visual world, the whole design is disrupted and the total effect the artist intended is destroyed. Personal preferences should not obscure the aesthetic merit of a design, and it is false to believe that the spirit of contemporary civilization and culture cannot be embodied in a design composed of representative symbols.

To interpret all art forms, as some critics do, in terms of a criterion predicated upon an abstract formula, is to reduce art to a subservient position in which individual taste prevails, regardless of artistic standards. Ungoverned enthusiasm for particular contemporary trends in art should not preclude appreciation of other contemporary styles. In an analysis of a work of art, the whole should not be obscured in one's anxiety to see the parts. Moreover, no one can rationally subscribe to a system of aesthetic criticism founded upon strongly held beliefs arising from enthusiasm for some particular art form.

Art is a manifestation of many forces—social, cultural, religious, political—and should be understood as such. Notwithstanding this historical fact, there are art critics who consistently interpret all art forms in terms of how closely these forms approach their personal predilections. A cursory glance of representative art is not sufficient study upon which to base an aesthetic

judgment. Objective, imitative art may harbor a domain rich in nobility of thought and feeling, transcending the importance of the representative forms themselves. Representative art forms are significant only insofar as they are the vehicles through which the artist communicates his experiences. Meaning in art is all-important — whether art is representative or abstract is of secondary consequence. A redefinition and clarification of terms used in the analysis and appreciation of art is a vital need today. Such an undertaking would lead to a better understanding and appreciation of art.

Piccirilli's art is representative, yet it is unlike that of any other sculptor. It is distinguished by a distinctive originality which forms the common denominator of an aesthetic formula applied to every sculptural conception. His art contributes vicariously to the observer's experiences, bringing him in contact with new horizons of thought. No art needs a better *raison d'être*.

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**CHRONOLOGICAL LIST
OF PRINCIPAL WORKS**

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CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PRINCIPAL WORKS

- 1885 ANGEL, Cemetery, Massa-Carrara, Italy
- 1888 GETULIO (Bronze), Collection of the Sculptor
- 1888 IOLE (Plaster), Collection of Mrs. Alfred Mileti, N.Y.
- 1889 HEAD OF A BOY (Bronze), The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, Buffalo, N.Y.
- 1890 BOY WITH SILVER COLLAR, Collection of the Sculptor
- 1890 GIULIANELLO, Collection of Mrs. C. Nichols Greene, Boston, Mass.
- 1890 YOUNG SAINT JOHN, Collection of the Sculptor
- 1893 CHRIST, Church of St. Francis Xavier, New York City
- 1895 DANCING FAUN, Collection of the Sculptor
- 1895 H. SOPHIE NEWCOMB, H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College, Tulane University, New Orleans, La.
- 1895-97 WARREN NEWCOMB, H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College, Tulane University, New Orleans, La.
- 1898 YOUNG FAUN, Collection of Mrs. William C. Eustis, Washington, D.C.
- 1899 JOHN MCDONOGH MEMORIAL MONUMENT, New Orleans, La.
- 1900 JOHN MCDONOGH (Bronze), Board of Education, New Orleans, La.
- 1901 ANNA M. JARVIS (McElroy), Jarvis Estate, White Plains, N.Y.

- 1901-13 MAINE MEMORIAL MONUMENT, Central Park, New
York City
COLUMBIA TRIUMPHANT (Bronze)
FORTITUDE
PACIFIC
ATLANTIC
JUSTICE
HISTORY
- 1901-13 IDEAL HEAD, The John Herron Art Institute, Indian-
apolis, Indiana
HEAD OF A WOMAN (Alabaster), Collection of the
Sculptor
STUDY OF A HEAD, Collection of the Sculptor
- 1904-09 MOTHER-AND-CHILD (Mater Consolatrix), Collection of
William Randolph Hearst, San Simeon, California
- 1905 RIGHT REVEREND HENRY A. BRANN, St. Agnes' Church,
New York City
- 1906 JOSEPHINE LOUISE NEWCOMB, H. Sophie Newcomb
Memorial College, Tulane University, New Or-
leans, La.
- 1906 MOTHER, Collection of the Sculptor
- 1906 H. SOPHIE NEWCOMB, H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial
College, Tulane University, New Orleans, La.
- 1908 MARIA (Bronze), Collection of the Sculptor
- 1908 THE OUTCAST (Pariah), (Bronze), Collection of Fiorello
H. LaGuardia, N.Y.
THE OUTCAST (Pariah), (Bronze), Collection of Angelo
Patri, N.Y.
THE OUTCAST (Pariah), Collection of the Sculptor

THE OUTCAST (Pariah), Church of St. Mark's In-The-Bouwerie, N.Y.

- 1908-10 **FURIO (Bronze), Collection of the Sculptor**
FURIO (Bronze), Collection of Mrs. Alfred Mileti, N.Y.
- 1909 **ALLEN S. APGAR MEMORIAL, Kensico Cemetery, Valhalla, N.Y.**
- 1909 **INDIAN LAWGIVER, The Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, N.Y.**
- 1909 **INDIAN LITERATURE, The Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, N.Y.**
- 1909 **A SOUL (Original Study in Bronze), Collection of Fiorello H. LaGuardia, N.Y.**
- 1909 **A SOUL (Marble), Collection of the Sculptor**
- 1910 **MOTHER-AND-CHILD (Bronze), Piccirilli Memorial, Woodlawn Cemetery, N.Y.**
- 1910 **I. WAYMAN DRUMMOND BAS-RELIEF (Silver), Collection of Dr. I. Wayman Drummond, N.Y.**
- 1910 **MUSIC (Bas-relief), Mrs. E. H. Harriman House, New York City**
- 1911 **THE EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY TOMB, Woodlawn Cemetery, Toledo, Ohio**
MUSIC (Bas-relief)
LABOR (Bas-relief)
FINE ARTS (Bas-relief)
ARCHITECTURE (Bas-relief)
- 1911 **PARIS (Bronze), Collection of the National Arts Club, New York**
PARIS (Bronze), Collection of Clendenin J. Ryan, Jr., New York

- 1912-13 FIREMEN'S MEMORIAL MONUMENT, Riverside Drive,
New York City
VOTIVE TABLET (Bas-relief)
DUTY
COURAGE
- 1912-13 HEAD OF A WOMAN (Bronze), Metropolitan Museum of
Art, N.Y.
- 1913 TWILIGHT (Crepuscolo), Collection of Mrs. Lewis R.
Morris, N.Y.
- 1913-14 FRICK PEDIMENTS, Frick Reference Library, N.Y.
ORPHEUS
SCULPTURE
- 1914 RAINBOW (Bronze), Collection of Mrs. Charles P. Pol-
lard, Rye, N.Y.
- 1914 FLOWER OF THE ALPS, Collection of Lawrence P. Fisher,
Detroit, Michigan
FLOWER OF THE ALPS, Collection of Irving T. Bush, N.Y.
FLOWER OF THE ALPS, Collection of R. S. Norwood, In-
dianapolis, Indiana
FLOWER OF THE ALPS, Gustav Oberlaender Estate, Read-
ing, Pa.
FLOWER OF THE ALPS (Bronze), Collection of Alexander
N. Bowers, San Antonio, Texas.
FLOWER OF THE ALPS (Bronze), Collection of G. M.
Adams, N.Y.
- 1915 MURAL MEDALLIONS (Six), J. P. Morgan Library, N.Y.
- 1915 NORTH PEDIMENT, Wisconsin State Capitol Building,
Madison, Wisconsin.
AGRICULTURE
SCIENCE



PLATE 70

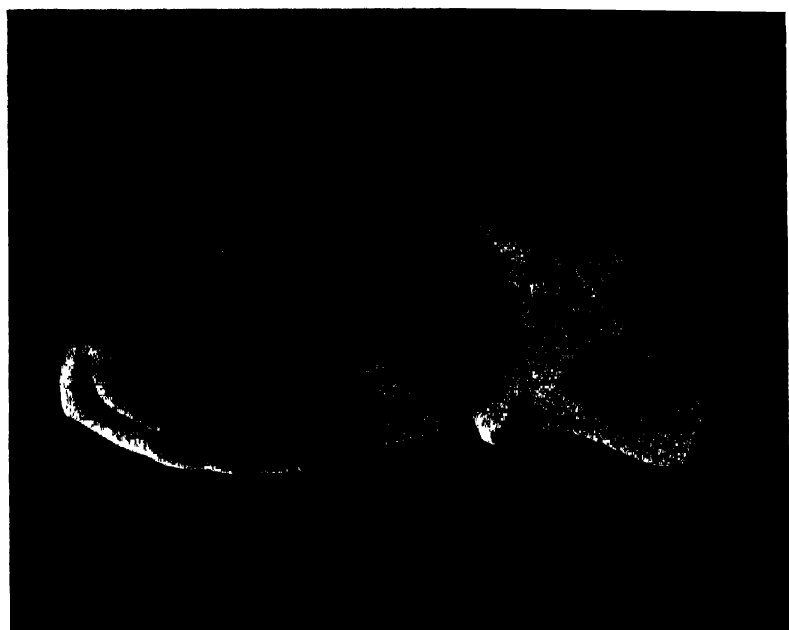


PLATE 71

THE WAVE

Collection of Paolino Gerli, N.Y.

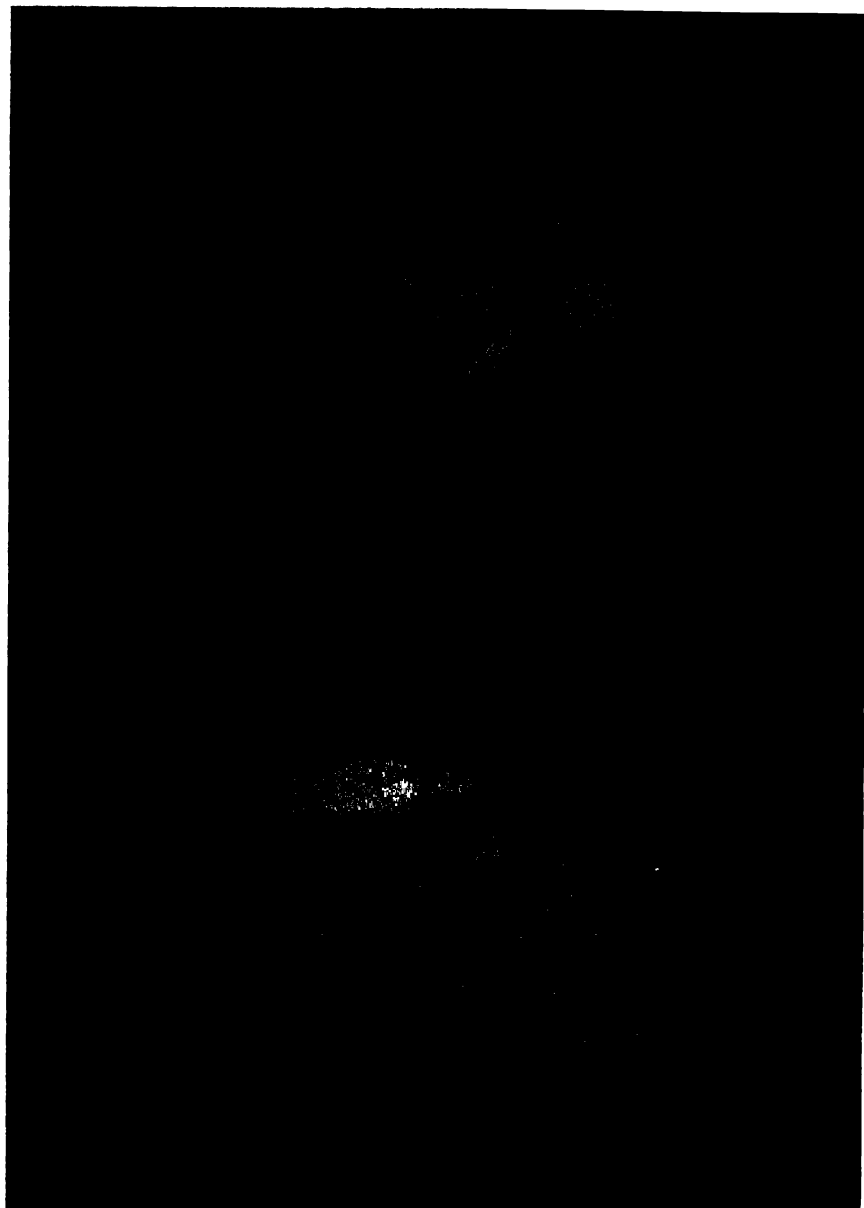


PLATE 72

Grand Central Art Galleries, N. Y

TORSO

[381]



PLATE 73

Collection of the Sculptor

MARCHITA

[383]

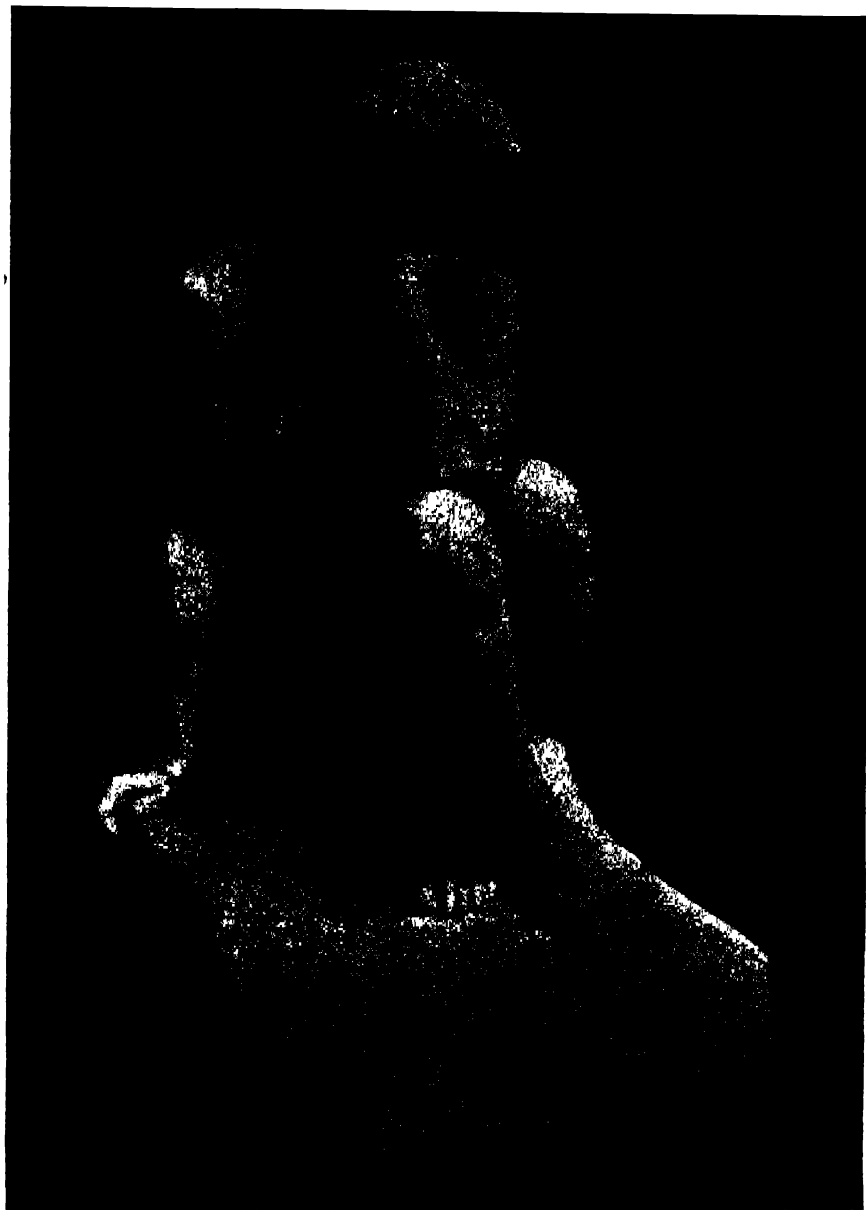


PLATE 74

Collection of the Sculptor

STUDY OF A WOMAN



PLATE 75A



PLATE 75B

Angelo Patri Memorial, Pauling, N. Y.

STUDY OF A WOMAN

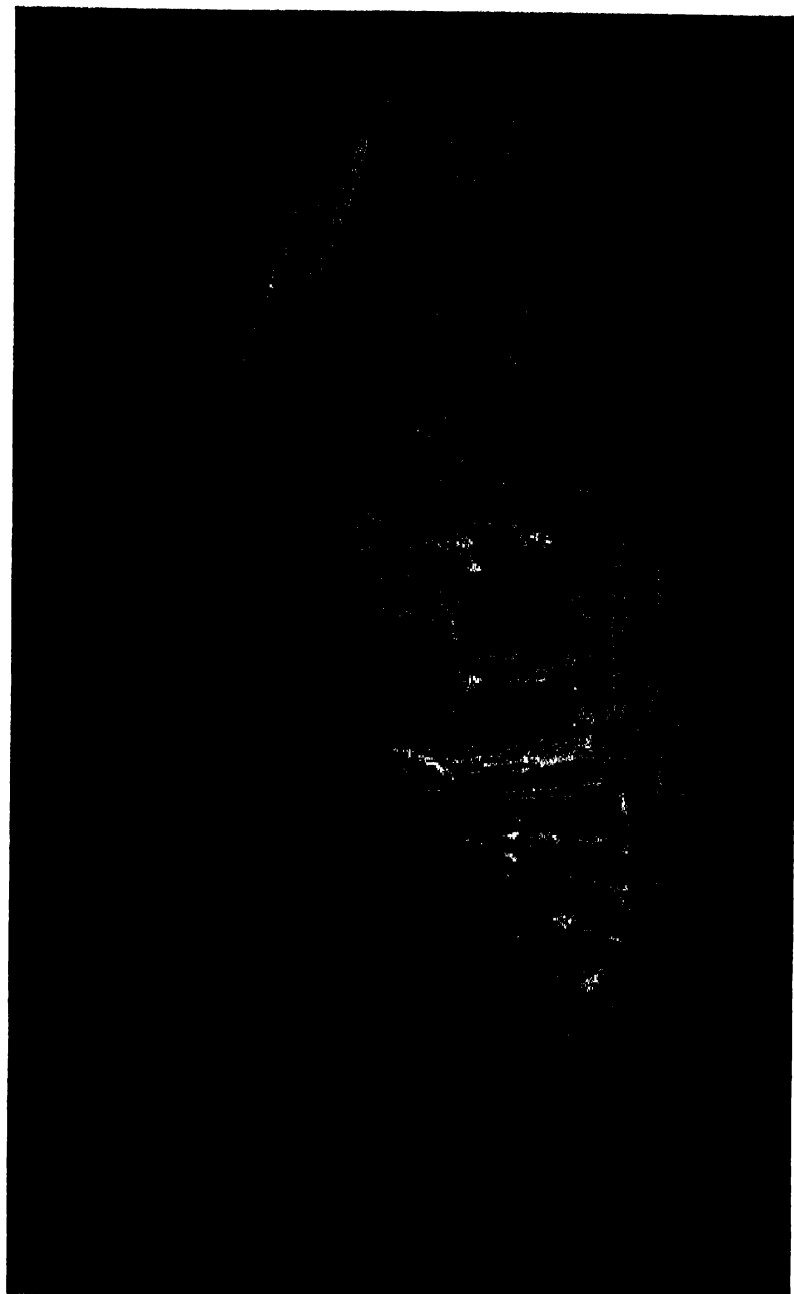


PLATE 76

Pediment, Administration Building, Saratoga Springs, N. Y.

HYGEIA AND AESCULAPIUS

- 1916 **BROKEN VASE (Bronze)**, Collection of The National Academy, N.Y.
 BROKEN VASE (Bronze), Collection of John Hill Morgan, N.Y.
- 1917 **THE FIRST STEP (Bronze)**, Collection of Fiorello H. LaGuardia, N.Y.
 THE FIRST STEP (Bronze), Collection of David Rockefeller, N.Y.
 THE FIRST STEP (Bronze), Collection of Angelo Patri, New York
 THE FIRST STEP (Bronze), Collection of Joseph D. McGoldrick, N.Y.
 THE FIRST STEP (Bronze), Nicholas Longworth Estate
 THE FIRST STEP (Bronze), Collection of Clendenin J. Ryan, Jr., N.Y.
- 1918 **SPRING DREAM**, Academy of Sciences and Fine Arts, Richmond, Va.
 SPRING DREAM, Collection of Edward S. Evans, Detroit, Michigan
 SPRING DREAM, Collection of R. M. Blair, Richmond, Virginia
 SPRING DREAM (Bronze), Collection of Fiorello H. LaGuardia, N.Y.
 SPRING DREAM (Bronze), Collection of Angelo Patri, New York
- 1920 **YOUNG VIRGIN**, Collection of R. M. Blair, Richmond, Virginia
 YOUNG VIRGIN, Collection of Fiorello H. LaGuardia, New York

- 1922 LA GUARDIA GRAVE MEMORIAL, Woodlawn Cemetery,
New York
- 1923 VICTORY (Bronze), Collection of Reverend D. J. De-
vine, Brooklyn, N.Y.
- 1923 FRAGELINA, Metropolitan Museum of Art, N.Y.
FRAGELINA (Bronze), Collection of Angelo Patri, N.Y.
FRAGELINA (Bronze), Collection of Fiorello H. La-
Guardia, N.Y.
- 1923 SPIRIT OF YOUTH, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington,
Virginia
- 1923 MOTHERS' WAR MEMORIAL, Albany, N.Y.
- 1925 FAUN PLAYING WITH SQUIRREL (Cement), Angelo Patri
Estate, Adirondack Mountains, N.Y.
- 1925 CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, Paul Hoffman Junior High
School, Bronx, N.Y.
- 1926-33 MARCHITA, Collection of the Sculptor
- 1927 NIGHT AND DAY, Fidelity-Philadelphia Trust Co., Pa.
- 1927 PROTECTION (Bas-relief), Fidelity-Philadelphia Trust
Co., Pa.
- 1931 THOMAS JEFFERSON (Portrait Bust), State Capitol Build-
ing, Richmond, Va.
THOMAS JEFFERSON (Original Plaster Study), Home of
Thomas Jefferson, Monticello, Va.
- 1931 JAMES MONROE (Portrait Bust), State Capitol Building,
Richmond, Va.
- 1931 HENRY WATKINS ALLEN, State Capitol Building, Baton
Rouge, La.
- 1931 THE WAVE, Collection of Paolino Gerli, N.Y.

- 1932 JAMES MONROE (Statue), Ash Lawn, Near Charlottesville, Va.
- 1932 JOY OF LIFE (Bronze), Governor's Executive Mansion, Richmond, Va.
- 1933 TORSO OF A WOMAN, Grand Central Art Galleries, N.Y.
- 1934 VICTORY (Bronze), Collection of Samuel Seabury, N.Y.
- 1934 STUDY OF A WOMAN, Collection of the Sculptor
STUDY OF A WOMAN (Bronze), Angelo Patri Memorial, Pawling, N.Y.
- 1934-35 HYGEIA AND AESCULAPIUS, Pediment, Administration Building, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.
- 1935 ETERNAL YOUTH (Glass), Rockefeller Center, N.Y.
- 1936 YOUTH LEADING INDUSTRY (Glass), Rockefeller Center, New York
- 1936 PRESENT-DAY POSTMAN (Aluminum), Post Office Building, Washington, D.C.
- 1936 RICHARD ELLIS (Bronze), Waxahachie, Texas.
- 1936 LAUGHING BOY AND GOAT (Lead), Collection of Archer M. Huntington, Brookgreen, Georgetown County, South Carolina
- LAUGHING BOY AND GOAT (Bronze), Collection of L. Andrew Reinhard, Bronxville, N.Y.
- LAUGHING BOY AND GOAT (Marble), Collection of the Sculptor
- 1937 JOY OF LIFE, Rockefeller Center, N.Y.
- 1938 BAS-RELIEF, Post Office Building, Whitman, Mass.
- 1939 THOMAS JEFFERSON (Bronze), Thomas Jefferson Hall, Queens College, Flushing, N.Y.

- 1940 MAYOR LOUIS F. EDWARDS (Bronze), City Hall Building,
Long Beach, N.Y.**
- 1940 POLICEMEN'S MEMORIAL MONUMENT (Bronze), New
York City**
- 1941 MARCONI MEMORIAL MONUMENT, Washington, D.C.
PORTRAIT BUST OF GUGLIELMO MARCONI
ELECTRICITY (Female Figure)**
- 1941 ALFRED RHETT DU PONT, JR. (Bronze Statue), Collection
of Mrs. Gertrude du Pont, Greenwich, Conn.**
- 1941-42 ALFRED RHETT DU PONT, JR. (Marble Bust), Collection
of the Sculptor**

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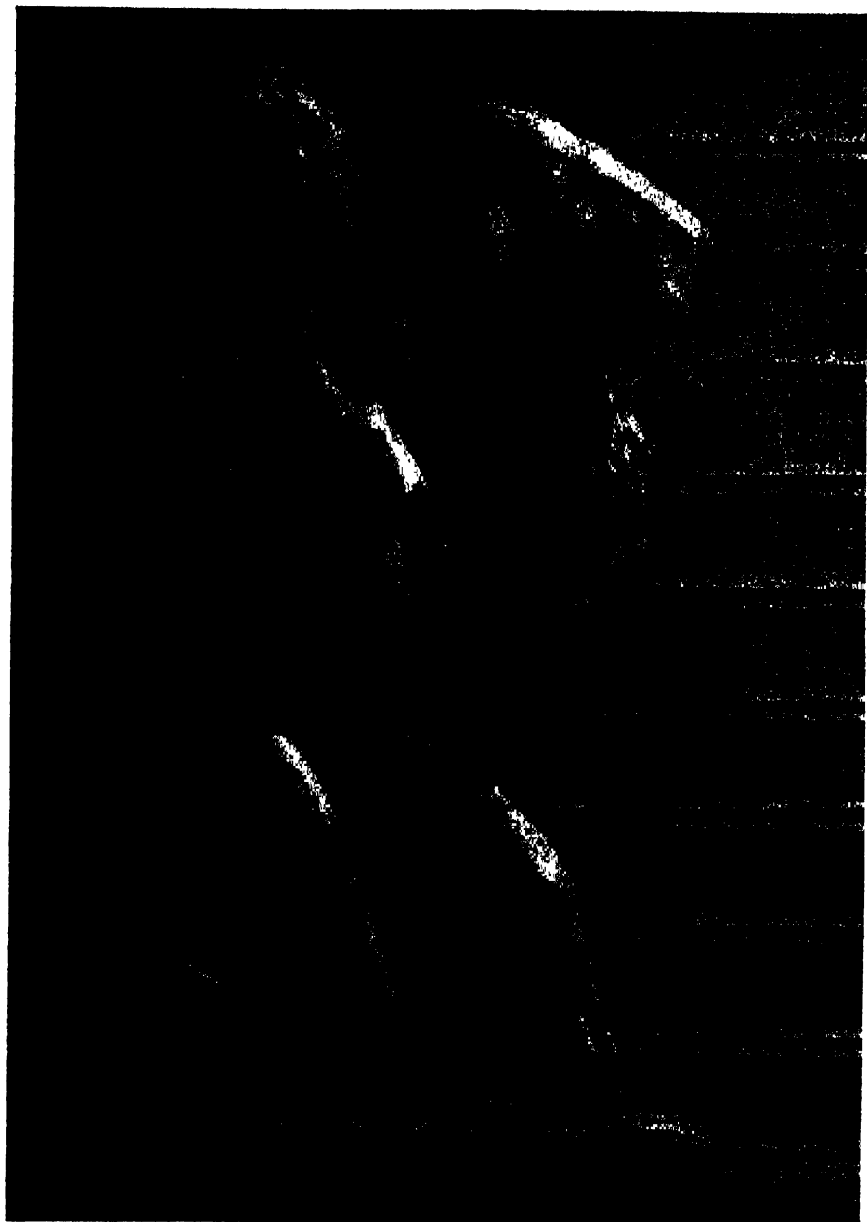


PLATE 77

Rockefeller Center, N. Y.

ETERNAL YOUTH

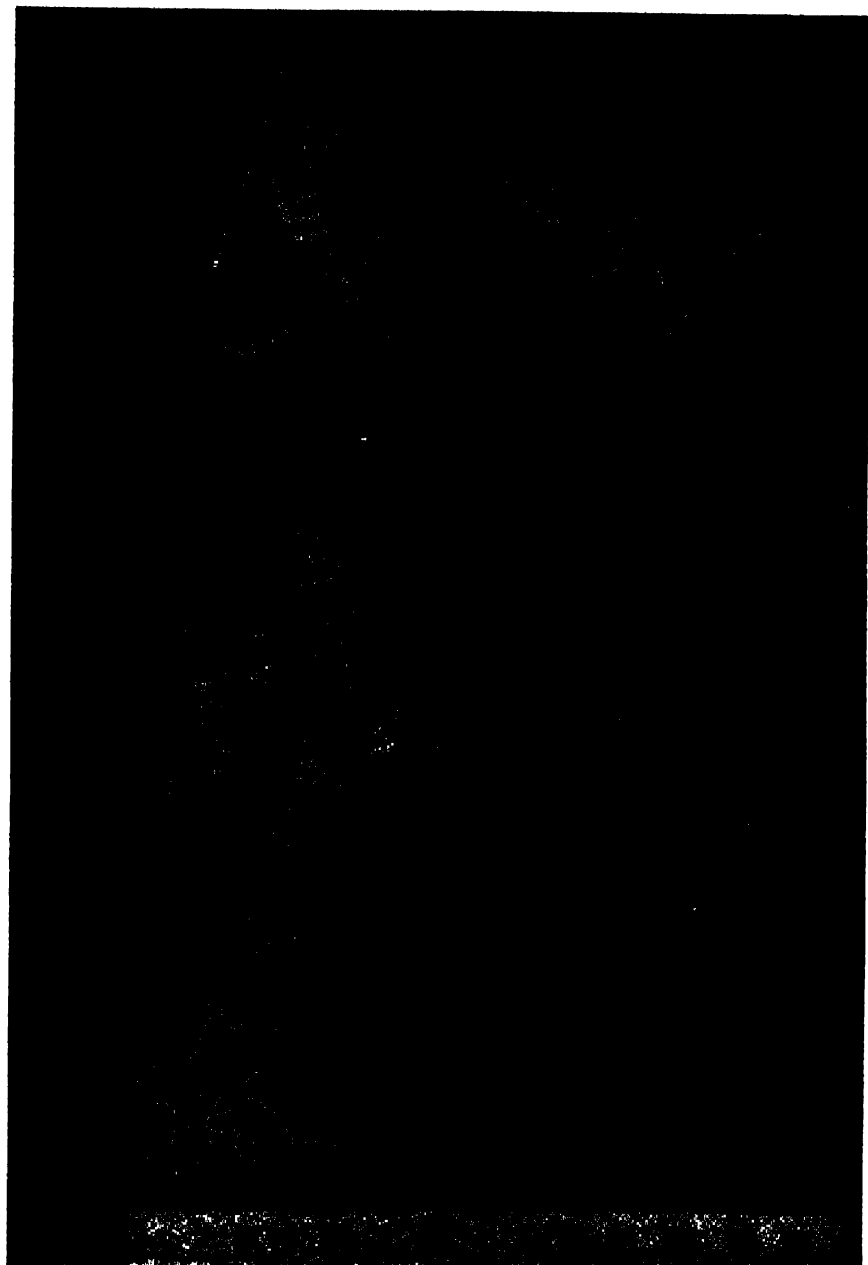
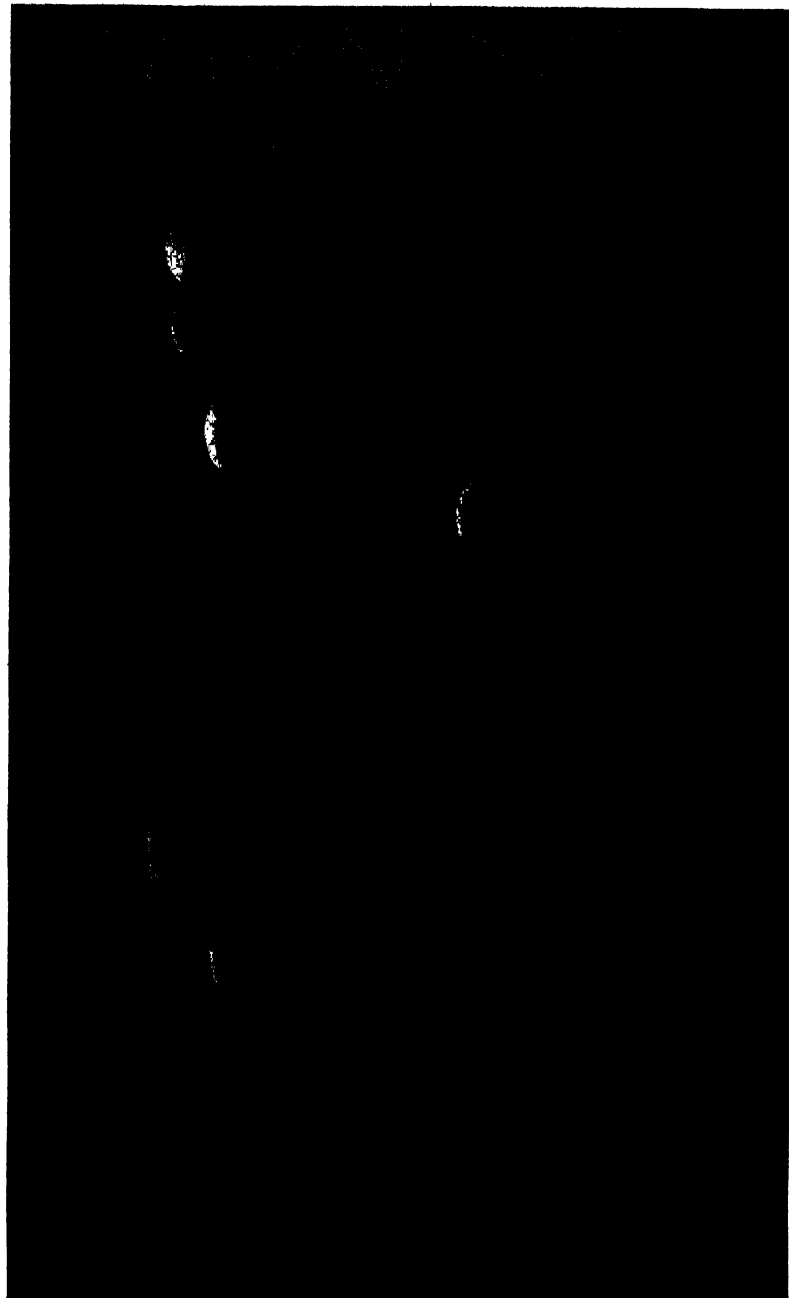


PLATE 78

Rockefeller Center, N. Y.

YOUTH LEADING INDUSTRY



Rockefeller Center, N. Y.

THE JOY OF LIFE

PLATE 79

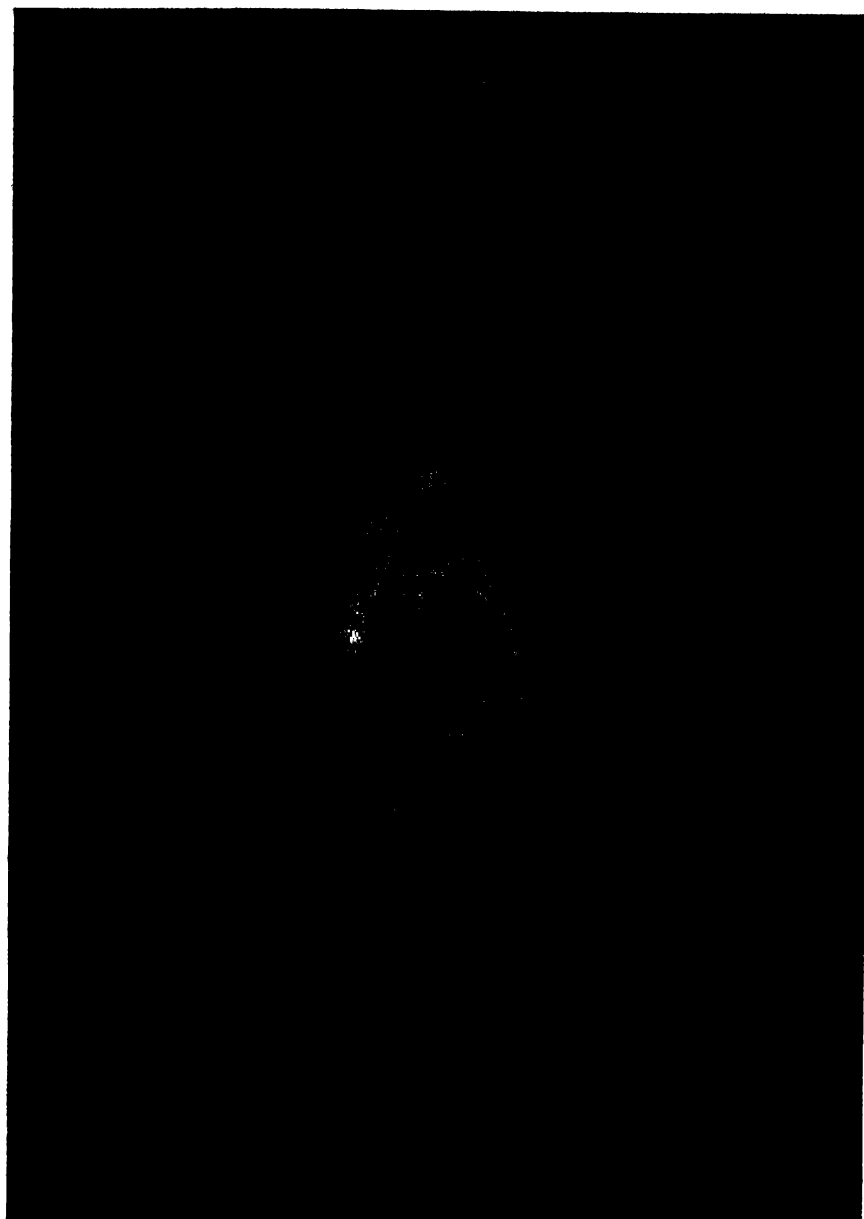


PLATE 80

Post Office Building, Washington, D. C.

PRESENT-DAY POSTMAN

[40°]



PLATE 81

PRESENT-DAY POSTMAN



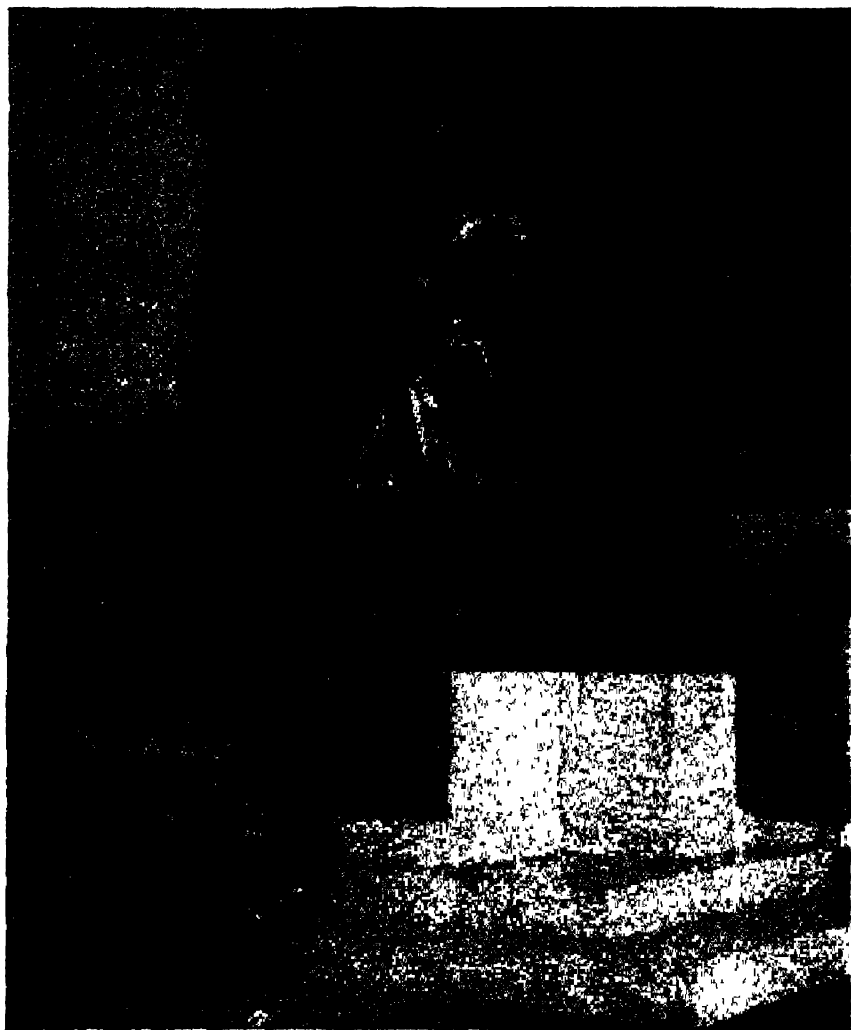


PLATE 83

Waxahachie, Texas

RICHARD ELLIS

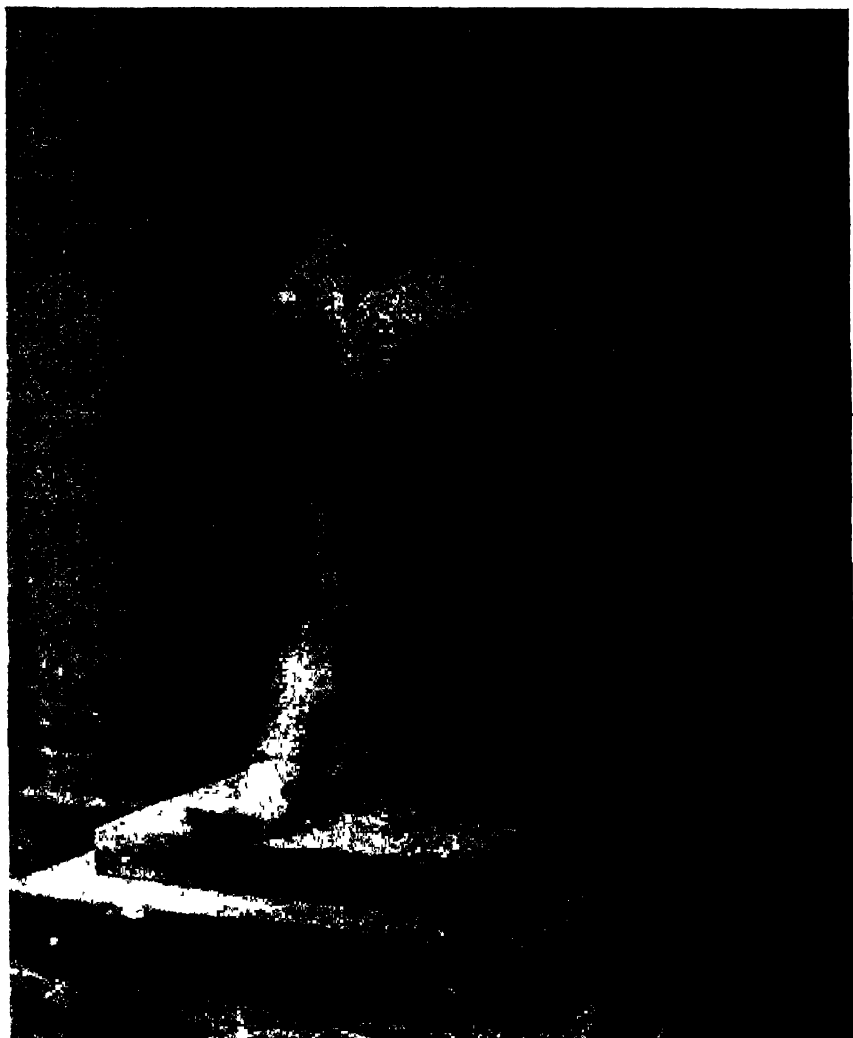


PLATE 84

*Collection of Archer M Huntington,
Brookgreen, Georgetown County, S C*

LAUGHING BOY AND GOAT

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LAUGHING BOY AND GOAT



PLATE 86

New York, N. Y

POLICEMEN'S MEMORIAL MONUMENT

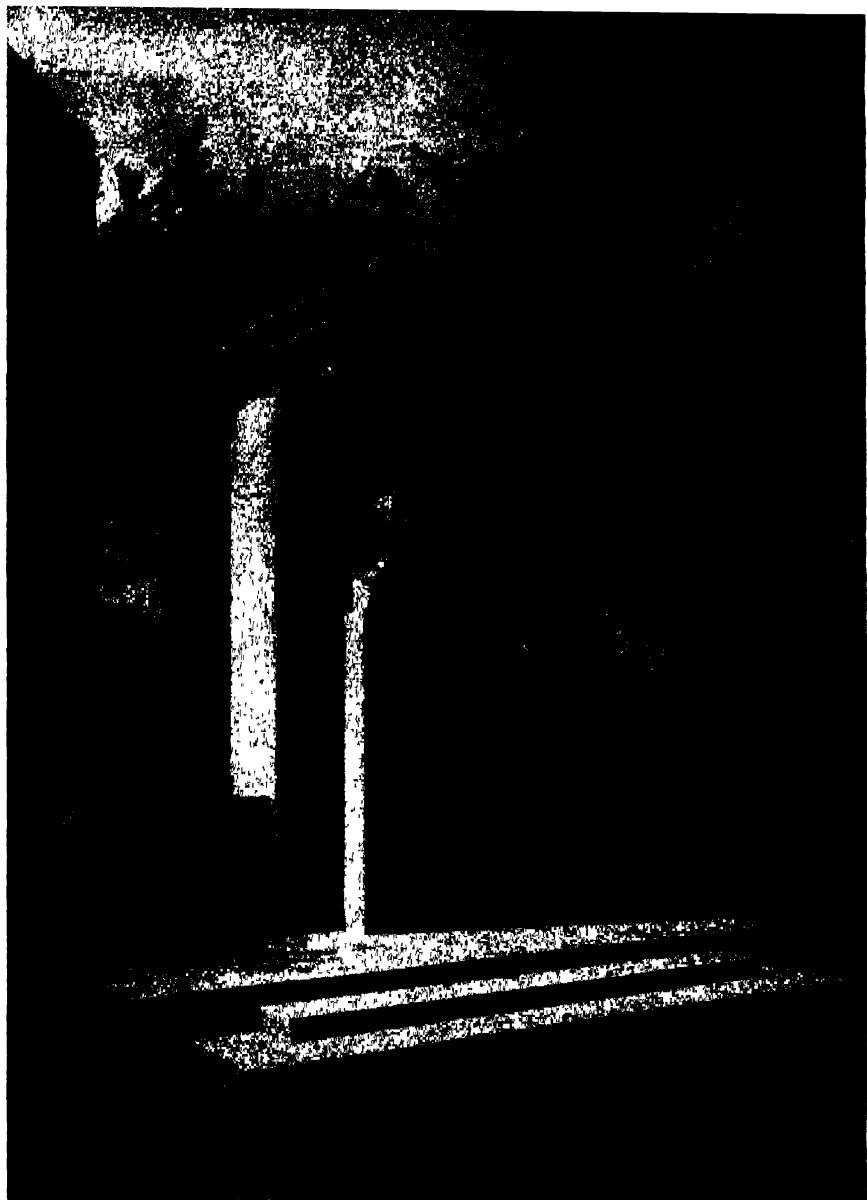


PLATE 87

Washington, D. C.

MARCONI MEMORIAL MONUMENT

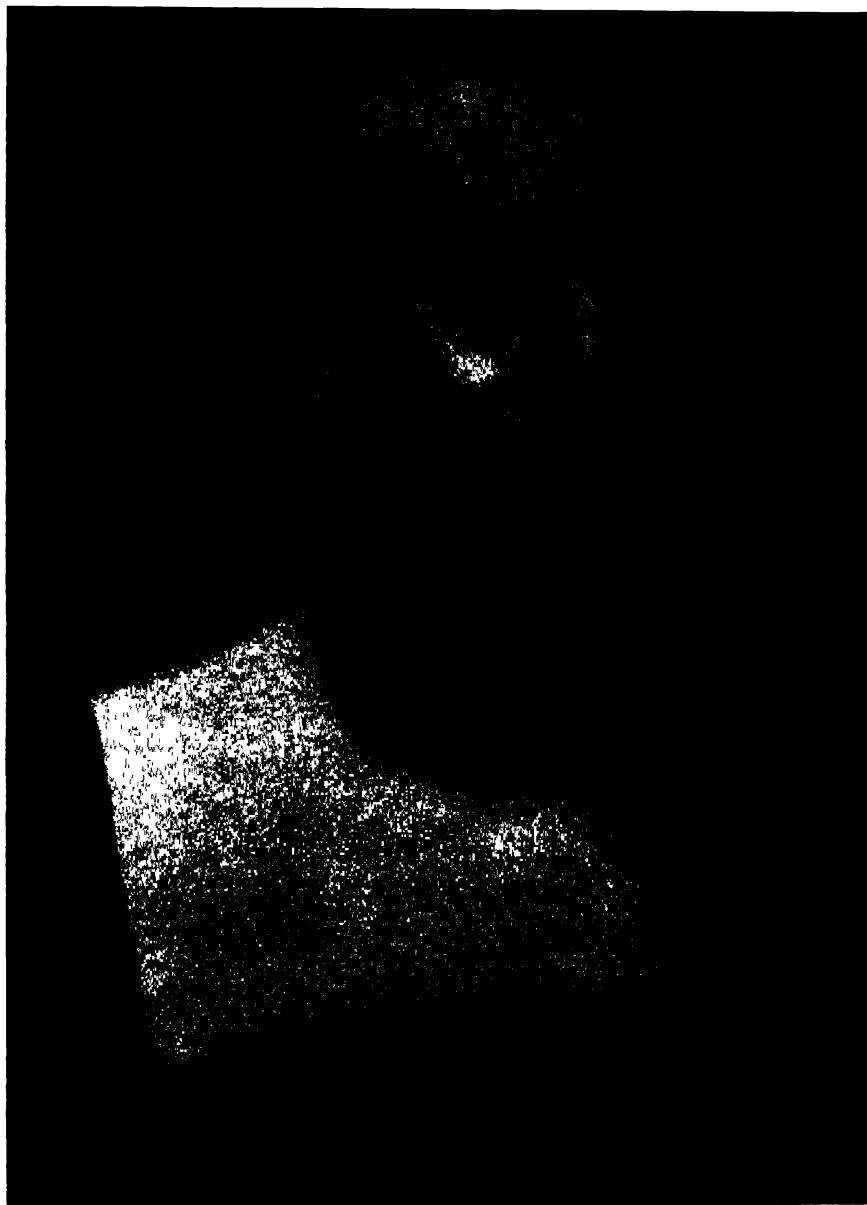


PLATE 88

Marconi Memorial Monument, Washington, D. C.

GUGLIELMO MARCONI

[429]

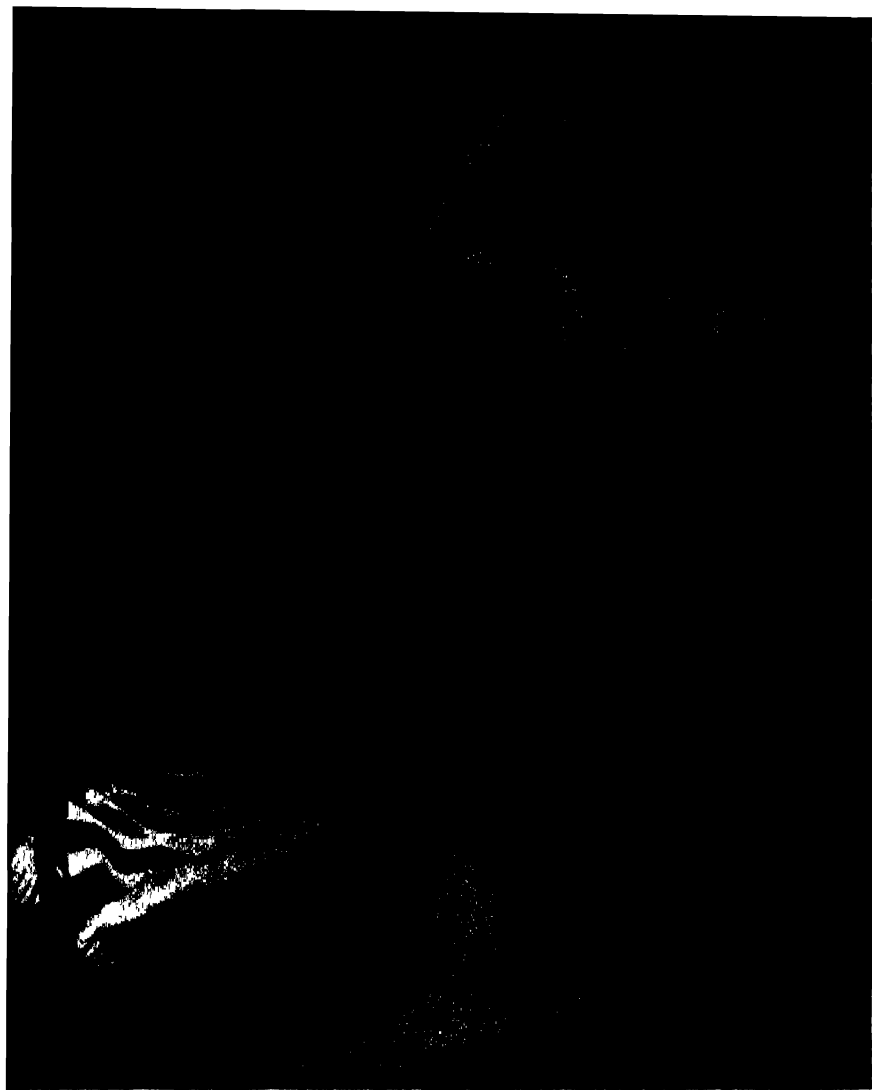


PLATE 80

Marconi Memorial Monument, Washington, D. C.

ELECTRICITY

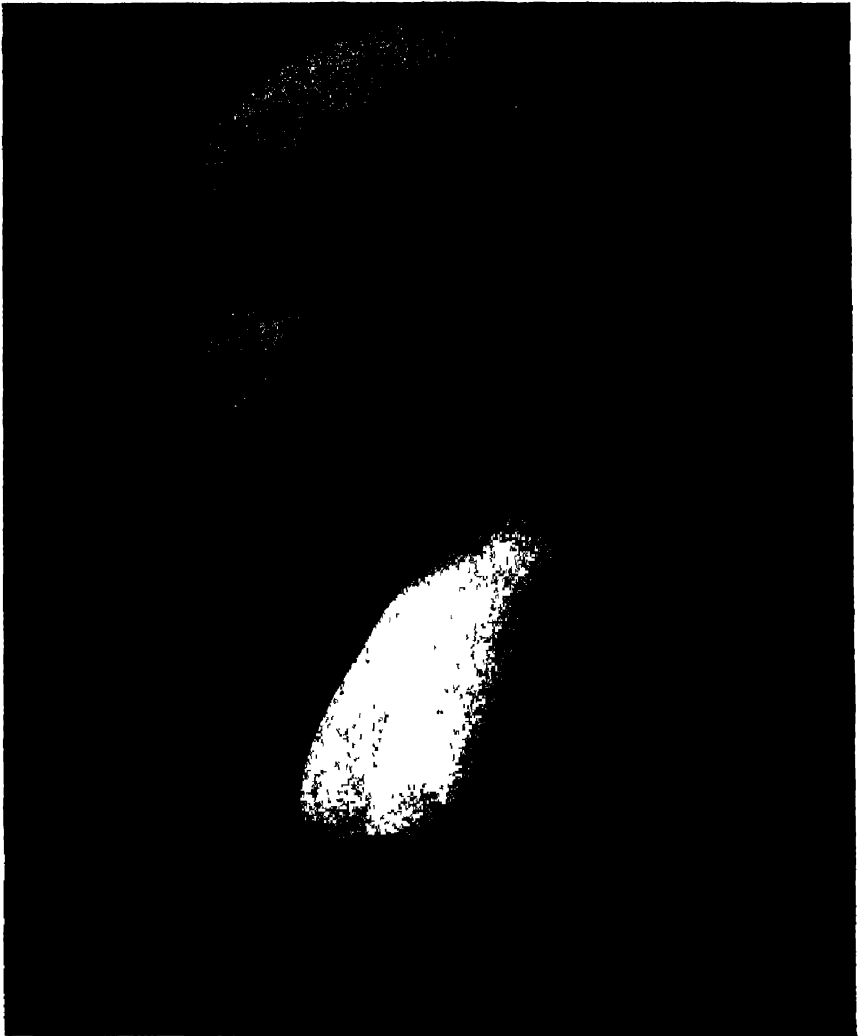


PLATE 90

Greenwich, Conn

ALFRED RHETT DU PONT, JR.

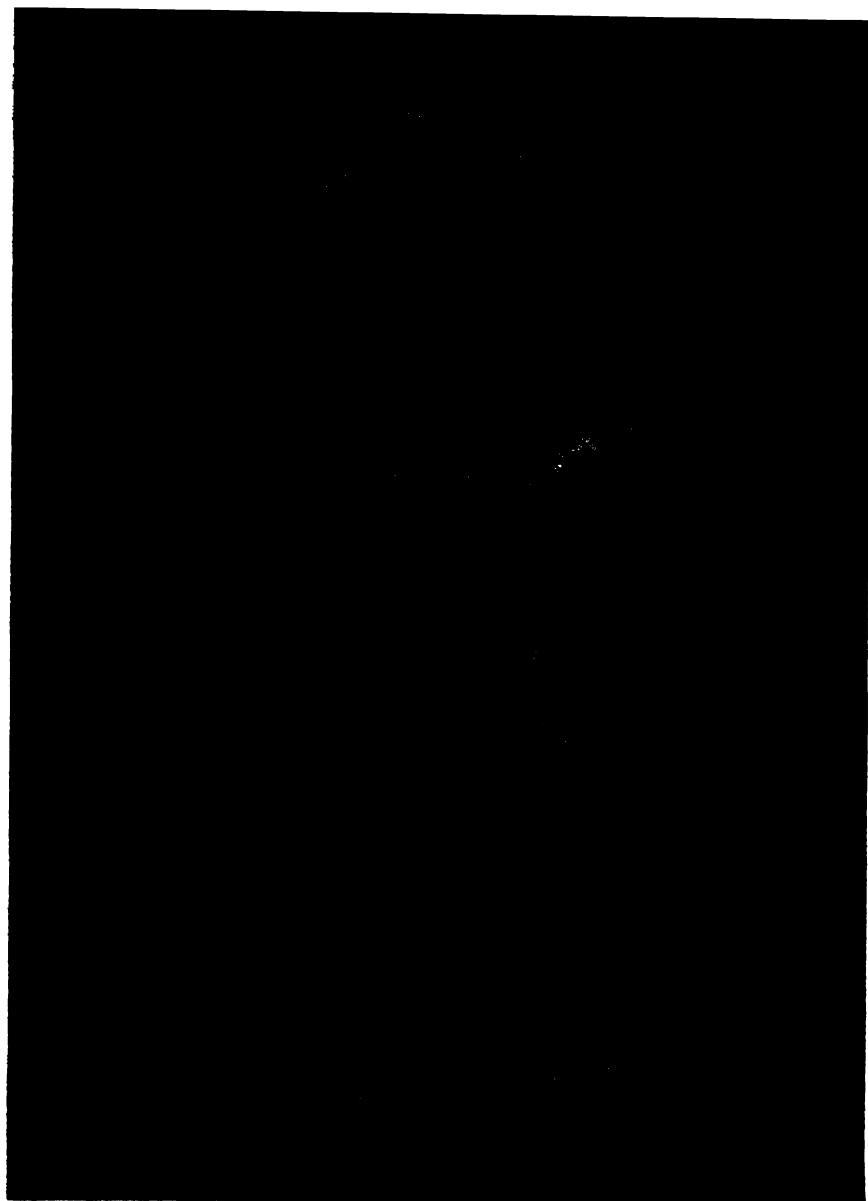


PLATE 91

Mothers' War Memorial, Albany, N Y.

PEACE

[435]

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



129 060

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LIBRARY

